• More on *The New Republic* and Those Cigarette Ads

# The Washington Monthly

JUNE 1985 /$2.50

How the Democrats Learned to Love the Three-Martini Lunch, *page 10.*

Saving New York's Subways, *page 25.*

Just One of the Guys: Linda Chavez Makes Good, *page 34.*

The Politics of Motherhood, *page 40.*

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*by Richard F. Staar*

According to V.V. Zagladin, one of Moscow's leading ideologists, the "historic mission" of the USSR has three aspects: to build communism in the USSR, to assist countries already following the communist path, and to support "social progress" toward communism in *all* other countries. Largely based on primary sources in the Russian language, this volume presents the people, policies, and practices of recent Soviet foreign policies.

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# LETTERS

## Buddy, spare a billion?

Please advise if Gordon Rayfield ["Strangling Debtor Democracies," April] is an officer of any particular bank, and if so, what is the name? A man so generous is one I would like to know. I plan to borrow from him at his bank—and deposit in mine.

My bank, unfortunately, expects me to pay back my loans. It checks carefully to be sure I use the funds for the purpose described, then requires a healthy hunk of security—just in case. Surely an old fashioned, if stable, operation.

From Gordon I would borrow, let my children live extravagantly, make risky investments, and on due date, I would simply advise him I was unable to pay, but would need another loan. I would indeed promise to be democratic with those spoiled children, but after all, a lot of merchants would surely suffer if the children were deprived of the level of life to which the first loan had caused them to become accustomed. Surely he would give me the loan.

Let Gordon remember it could be *his* money that an unwise banker has loaned to a non-paying country. It might be *his* bank that folds because the loan can't be paid.

The law of contracts is a pretty good thing. You borrow—you better repay. The idea that any banker should use my deposits (the bankers don't own the money, you know) for bad loans, then take a non-interest bearing IOU from a bankrupt organization, is an idea that has little attraction. A promise to democratize is hardly security—history being what it is.

L. S. PETERSON
Hastings, Nebraska

## Blame the DNC, not caucuses

One angle I think is missing from Paul Barrett's excellent "Caucus-Happy Democrats" article [April]: the tension between the interested, activist grassroots members, who in most cases are more ideologically informed and coherent, and the Democratic party's overall leaders. The latter, during the 16 years that produced the four presidential defeats Barrett refers to, certainly helped cut each other up during primary season, but tended at all times to start mouthing the sort of bland, shibboleths that lead to the impression America has a one-party system. They sometimes did this in an attempt to paper over strong personal differences within the party, as Mondale did last year. But usually it was an attempt to avoid adopting what Gov. Babbitt terms "overreaching, unifying themes of the party in the national interest." The leaders were afraid that these themes would be too radical, despite the endorsement of a majority of the people who actually did the party's work as activists.

Why shouldn't a gay or lesbian activist who knows damn well that social ideology is just as concrete an issue as defense spending, or an Hispanic whose family contains members who work below minimum wage or are taunted with "green-card" jokes, get a little frenzied over the "Let's All Pull Together" policies and rhetoric of the Mondales, O'Briens, O'Neills, Nunns, and Peppers? Their caucusing, formal or informal, is a reaction to a failure of leadership, and rounding up the media's usual suspect isn't really the way to pillory those who deserve the blame for the Democrats' decline. Most of the issues the caucus members and organizers have pushed in platform committee and floor fights are legitimate, and the fact that society hasn't resolved them, and the Democratic leadership can't even be made to stand behind their resolution, is much more the problem than an "image" brought on by the two-year-old caucus procedures. The caucuses should go, but they could have been avoided in the first place.

RICHARD S. PIEDMONTE
Concord, California


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## To the defense of ETS

It's always amusing to read a new installment in the horrors of the Educational Testing Service ["How They Write the SAT," David Owen, April].

Owen is concerned that some bright student may give a "wrong" answer to a question as the result of being able to see more possibilities than were dreamt of by the wits of ETS. However, anyone who can discern (as does the author) valid reasons for more than one choice is certainly capable of also discerning, like Owen, that ETS invariably rewards the most pedestrian, conventional, humorless, and conformist response. The test-taker's creed: Never be clever!

RONALD GRIMES
Silver Spring, Maryland

So you've decided to join the ETS bashers. Well, why not? Over the last ten years every other national magazine has done its ETS piece, and *somebody* has to bring up the rear. But does David Owen have any new insights into the Scholastic Aptitude Tests and their creators? Regrettably, no. His criticisms are not only stale but also largely unperceptive and trivial.

Take the tired complaint that the tests reward predictable and humorless thinking. So what? A young person who takes a test to prove his competence in a subject area is much like one who goes to a job interview. For 30 minutes he's expected to act sober and serious and to refrain from making irrelevant wisecracks. If he willfully marks "bring me a spoon" as the best response to a lapful of spilled soup (knowing that the task is to demonstrate comprehension of French, not the ability to amuse a dinner companion), he should expect to forfeit some points. If, on the contrary, he suppresses the witty impulse and selects the appropriate (dull, conventional) response, will his creativity be permanently crippled? Come off it! The "rewards conventional thinking" complaint is a frivolous one that assumes the test-taker doesn't know why he's taking the test or what he wants to prove by it.

Then there's the "cultural bias" issue. Suppose we want to test someone's knowledge of the verb *equivocate*. We can do so accurately with the sentence "Biff equivocated" as we can with the sentence "Senora Aquilar equivocated." Neither item is a "fairer" test of verbal knowledge than the other. Yet when Owen discusses ETS's ritual counting and balancing of female and minority references, his only complaint is that this is done cursorily. He thinks the nose-counting should be more meticulous. He overlooks that these references are meaningless window dressing to assuage pressure groups or that they bear no relation to the test's fairness as a measurement device. He has simply missed the story.

G. R. PATERSON
Evanston, Illinois


# The Washington Monthly

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*Editors* Jonathan Rowe, William McGowan, Paul M. Barrett.
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Published monthly except combined July/August issue by The Washington Monthly Company, 1711 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 462-0128.



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ISSN 0043-0633.

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $30; two years, $56; three years, $77. Additional charges per year, foreign subscriptions: Canada, $3; other, $25 air mail, $3 surface mail. Back issues, $3. Send all remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to 1711 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009. For change of address, please provide four weeks' notice and return old address label. New subscriptions only: 1-800-341-1522. Postmaster: Send form 3579 to The Washington Monthly, 1711 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

The Washington Monthly is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106.

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# CONTENTS

Volume Seventeen, Number Five June 1985

**Tilting at Windmills**
*by Charles Peters*
Rainmaking...maiden aunts... Amtrak...and other odds and ends. 4

**How the Democrats Learned To Love the Three-Martini Lunch**
*by Jonathan Rowe*
You'd think Republican fat cats would be the only ones protecting expense account living. 10

**Saving New York's Subways**
*by Jonathan Alter*
Kiley to unions: Merit doesn't mean answering silly test questions. It means making the trains run on time. 25

**Just One of the Guys**
*by Paul M. Barrett*
Patronized by liberals, Linda Chavez has found her real friends on the right. Or that's what she'd like you to believe. 34

**The Politics of Motherhood**
*by Deborah Fallows*
A mother of two rejects the conservative and women's movement positions on family and proposes solutions for parents who want to raise their kids themselves. 40

**A Final Word on *The New Republic* and Those Cigarette Ads**
*by David Owen*
Where ethics and profits meet. 51

ON POLITICAL BOOKS

**A Vision of the Ideal Newspaper**
*by Paul Bass*
Ralph Ingersoll and the short, passionate life of *PM*. 54

**LETTERS** 1
**WHO'S WHO** 22
**MEMO OF THE MONTH** 33
**MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD** 27
**POLITICAL PUZZLE** 24
**TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES** 50
**POLITICAL BOOKNOTES** 57

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# TILTING AT WINDMILLS

The invitation recited that six famous Republicans "invite you to join them for a reception honoring Congressman Hal Daub for his appointment to the House Ways and Means Committee and to celebrate his birthday." Discreetly placed in the lower left-hand corner were the words "$250.00 per person." You can be sure it wasn't Daub's birthday that was inspiring people to pay $250.00. It was his membership on the leading tax-writing committee. Too many congressmen, aware of this fact, seek committee assignments not on the basis of knowledge about or belief in the importance of the committee's work but in its potential for attracting campaign contributions....

For all my friends in the bar who feel I'm sometimes too severe in my criticism of lawyers, I offer the following evidence of the profession's high-mindedness. It is a brochure sent to lawyers around the country headlined "Rainmaking." It advertises a "practical, shirt-sleeved seminar" on how "you can successfully market your professional services." Among the items listed in the seminar agenda are "Putting potential clients in a buying mood" and "Building client loyalty and dependency."

The latter represents the sickest aspect of the practice of law. The ambitious lawyer knows the way to get ahead is to make affluent clients think they can't live without him. He manipulates their fears and insecurities until they are firmly in the habit of consulting him before they go to the bathroom.....

Almost everyone has a maiden aunt. I didn't have one in the legal sense, but in reality I had one of the best kind. Her name was Ella Anderson—I called her Pud. She lived in the apartment upstairs with her elderly mother while I was a boy and lavished on me the love that would have gone to her own children had she married. Her father had been an engineer on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad but had died in the days before pensions and social security. Pud was a cashier in a restaurant. Her mother, who was over seventy, clerked in a dress shop. I'm sure their combined weekly income did not exceed forty dollars. But they were from Staunton, Virginia, and thought of themselves as ladies of the old South. Their apartment was decorated with photographs of Confederate generals. As a result of their devotion to the South and my parents' to the Democratic party, I grew up with two heroes that might seem inconsistent to some—Robert E. Lee and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Pud died last month. Her funeral was in Staunton. I knew I had to go, and to get there I thought of the railroads that she had loved, because of her father, almost as much as she did the old South.

So I called Amtrak. Was there a train to Staunton? "Yes," the clerk replied, "but it only runs three times a week." I said "Does it run Wednesday (the day of Pud's funeral)?" The answer was yes, and "there's a return train to Washington later that day."

As I rode south through Manassas, Culpepper, and Charlottesville, I relaxed in what Pud and I would have called the dining car but Amtrak calls the lounge. I thought about David



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Stockman's campaign to abolish Amtrak. And once again I wanted to summon liberals to a counterattack.

Stockman says Amtrak is wrong because it is subsidized. His argument relies on the fact that "subsidy" has become a dirty word.

We can free ourselves from this mental trap by thinking for a moment how sublime it would be if we only had to subsidize the defense budget instead of paying the whole thing.

There are certain things a society can decide it wants—e.g. good postal or rail service, or the survival of the family farm. It may have to foot the entire bill for these services—as it does in the case of police and fire protection. Or it may—as in the case of Amtrak—get individuals who benefit from it to share part of the load.

This doesn't mean all services should be subsidized, or that those that are should all be subsidized to the same degree—some are clearly more worthy than others—or that we should be indifferent to the cost of the service that is "subsidized." In the case of Amtrak, overmanning and counterproductive work rules are a severe problem—with a lot of employees sitting around while a few are hideously overworked—but, instead of eliminating the service itself, we should focus on eliminating the waste and inefficiency of its delivery. Fire the rude and lazy. Change the antiquated work rules. But, finally, remember that whatever the cost, there is an almost unbelievable contrast between the friendly interaction of old and young on Amtrak and the cold hostility of the Eastern shuttle.

Speaking of Pud's funeral, it reminded me of the great wisdom of Virginia's liquor laws before the sixties, when hard drink was first permitted. In the fifties, you could get only wine and beer in a restaurant. This was civilized. It was hard to get drunk. That is not the case today, as I learned drinking martinis while waiting for the train back to Washington....

Pud's death reminded me of the demise of an American institution whose enormous social value has gone unappreciated—the boarding house. After the death of her mother, Pud moved to one of these establishments. Before my parents were married, my father had lived in one and taken his meals there. "Room and Board"—do any of you remember Major Hoople?—was the name of a popular comic strip of the twenties and thirties. Typically there would be twelve boarders, and an equal or smaller number of roomers depending upon the size of the house. Usually, they were operated by a widow whose only source of income was the home she was left on her husband's death.

The special social role boarding houses played was that they offered single men and women a place to meet and get to know one another under natural circumstances. If you ate dinner with someone every day and sang songs or played bridge in the parlor together or just sat around the front porch chatting, you got to know them in a way that is almost impossible amidst the near-hysteria of the singles bar. If the widow was respectable, it was, in otherwise prudish times, perfectly permissable for single men and women to live in the same boarding house—separate bedrooms, of course. In addition, the regulars were always bringing guests. And you might dine once or twice a week at other houses so that your circle of friends could steadily broaden and the likelihood of your meeting Mr. or Miss Right increased....

Speaking of Major Hoople, he was one of that great group of comic characters that emerged in the twenties—the incompetent confidence man, the bumbling hustler, the comic side of Willy Loman. The Kingfish on Amos and Andy was another of them, as were the characters played by W.C. Fields and Groucho Marx. In the post World War II years, the comic view of the world that made this character possible seems to have retreated, if not disappeared. He briefly reappeared as Sergeant Bilko and had one great final flowering in the performance by Zero Mostel as Max Bialystock in "The Producers"....

Have you heard about Harvard's refusal of tenure to Paul Starr? You do not have to be one of his unqualified admirers to realize that he is


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light years ahead of most sociologists in perceptiveness and writing ability. His *The Social Tranformation of American Medicine* won both a Pulitzer Prize and a Bancroft Prize. Daniel Bell says, "A man of outstanding abilities has been rejected." Why?

Starr's enemies want to make the social sciences "scientific", emphasizing quantifiable studies and surveys. Their work, while occasionally useful, is uniformly dreary and customarily devoted to subjects of the most marginal relevance to the pressing problems of society.

There are, at the other extreme of these professions, great bullshit artists whose lectures and articles are entertaining, but embarrassingly devoid of either hard evidence or rigorous thought.

So there is probably a middle ground between the two extremes to which reasonable men should repair, but the anti-Starr factions at Harvard represent the worse of the two—worse because they are boring and deeply hostile to those who aren't....

If you have not yet begun to question the quality of higher education in America, consider the five bestselling magazines in college bookstores: *Cosmopolitan*, *People*, *Playboy*, *Glamour*, and *Vogue*....

Every time I get to thinking maybe Stockman is okay after all, a story like this appears:

"Environmental protection Agency officials said today that they had been pressed by the Office of Management and Budget to weigh the dollar value of human life when considering how to regulate asbestos."

If this is not ghoulish enough for you, consider what followed in the story—a report by Philip Shabecoff in *The New York Times*:

"Under the formula the budget office proposed, the officials said, regulations would always appear mathematically to be more costly than the benefits they produced."

If that isn't enough for you, Shabecoff continues, "the budget office also said that the value of a human life should be discounted by 10 percent a year in cases where asbestos-related diseases might remain dormant for a long time."

What this means is that it's in industry's interest to expose us to asbestos as infants. That way our value will be totally discounted by age 10, and there will be no need to spend a cent on protecting us from asbestos....

Recently in this space I mentioned the strong anti-semitic streak among country club conservatives. Curiously enough this is often accompanied by strong pro-Israel sentiments. The reason for this is that Israel's toughness appeals to hawkish Americans. But neo-conservative Jews are fools to believe that this admiration for Israel has reduced the conservative's prejudice against Jews as individuals and as a group. The liberal friends of the neo-conservative Jew may be less likely to automatically favor Israel but they are more likely to like him....

You can't say the Reaganites aren't a classy bunch. Take their closest ally in the labor movement, the president of the Teamsters' Union, a.k.a. Jackie Presser. He may not even admit that much the next time he's asked to testify. On the last occasion, April 23, according to Kevin Klose of *The Washington Post*, he "refused to answer questions, invoking constitutional protections against self-incrimination 15 times."

Presser's shyness was induced by testimony that he had taken a cash bribe to permit certain firms to operate the following scam:

"The firms"—according to Klose—"took fees of 7 to 10 percent of the gross payroll for a company's drivers and negotiated a cheaper labor contract with the connivance of the local leadership and the blessings of corrupt national or regional Teamster officials."

As one witness put it, "Everybody benefitted except the union members"...

The Japanese will surely rank as the greatest con artists of modern time. Each year, a series of headlines proclaiming rising American indignation at unfair trade practices is followed by a story that says "Japanese Premier Pledges Trade Reform" or something of that sort. The story fades from the papers. And a year later we discover that the reforms actually implemented were so minor as to be


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practically undiscernable. Now, I suspect that same technique is being applied to defense expenditures. As Americans were beginning to protest that they were bearing too much of the cost of Japan's defense while Japan was prospering, this headline appeared in *The Washington Post*:

"Japan Plans
New Outlays
For Defense;
Higher Spending
To Ease U.S. Burden"

When we reach the details of the story, it develops that the word "plans" is used advisedly in the headline. The proposal has not been adopted by the Diet, or even presented to it. It is "now being circulated within Japan's Defense Agency." The increase in expenditures would not be immediate but spread out over five years. An example of the spectacular results if the entire plan is passed and implemented:

"Japan would buy four more Grumman E2C's, a small propeller-driven radar plane, bringing its total to 12 of the aircraft". . . .

The people who run *The Washington Post* have many virtues but a passion for self-criticism is not among them. Consider two recent stories. One was about UPI's financial troubles. Despite the fact that press critics have explained that Chapter 11 proceedings do not mean that a company is bankrupt, the *Post* ran the UPI story under the headline "United Press International Files for Bankruptcy." It repeated the error in two other headlines about UPI's problem. *The New York Times* on the other hand had no trouble getting it right: "UPI Authorized to Seek Protection From Creditors." This is not a minor error. When employees and people doing business with a company read that it is going bankrupt, they panic. Customers flee, and the reports of bankruptcy may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. But Chapter 11 should not inspire panic. The company continues to operate, and pays its employees and its creditors—only it is protected by the court from creditors who greedily try to get more than their fair share of the money available to pay them or who try to get paid faster than the company has resources to do.

The second story was about a recall of Land O'Lakes turkeys. Critics have contended that the Business


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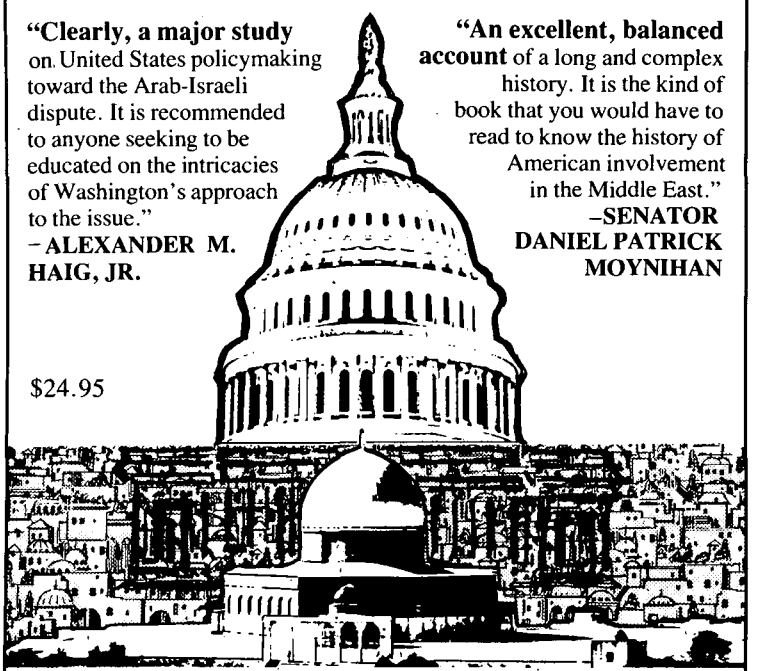

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section, where the *Post* runs recall stories, seems a bizarre place to attract the attention of the public. For example, the Land O'Lakes turkeys may have contained metal fragments. This, it would seem, is news for the average person who might be going to the supermarket and should run in a prominent place in a general news section. The *Post* ran it in the lower right hand corner of the second page of its Business section. To its left and above it was "Hutton Barred From Some Business," and to its right, on the lower left hand corner of page three was "What Stocks Did." The absurdity of this kind of thing has even been pointed out by the *Post*'s own ombudsman. Yet the practice continues. Some suspect the *Post* is trying to placate its advertisers. I suspect bureaucratic turf wars, which are fiercer at the *Post* than at any government agency, are a greater factor. But neither should be more important to the *Post*'s editors than protecting the consumer. They really ought to be ashamed....

Can Mario Cuomo be elected president? My guess is yes. Would he make a good president? My guess is no. My reasons were captured in a recent article about the governor that appeared in the *Boston Observer*. Its author, Evan Cornog, reports:

"One veteran observer noted that Cuomo 'has very few advisors,' and 'doesn't give his staff the authority to make decisions,' Another official complains that even some of Cuomo's highest ranking aides 'frequently don't know where the governor is' on important policy questions. The result is that decisions just don't get made."

You can't run the United States government without having the help of a lot of people you know and trust. If your circle of trust is small—with Jimmy Carter it did not extend beyond six people: his wife, Jody Powell, Hamilton Jordan, Frank Moore, Stuart Eisenstadt, and his secretary Susan Clough—you are likely to govern as Carter did, with little impact on the vast machinery of Washington. In Cuomo's case, that circle of trust does not extend, I am told, beyond his own family....

Have you heard about Gary Hart's namesake in California? He is a state senator who is also tall, handsome, and a Democrat—and can claim to be the "real Gary Hart" since he never changed his name. In one respect, at least, he could teach Washington's Gary Hart a lesson. He has had, as *The Washington Post*'s Jay Mathews and *The New Republic*'s Mickey Kaus have pointed out, the courage to stand up to the powerful California Teacher's Association. It was U.S. Senator Gary Hart's craven performance before the National Education Association convention in 1983, where he told the NEA exactly what it wanted to hear, that disheartened many of his potential supporters....

Politicians dream of drafting legislation that will command the support of almost everyone and offend almost no one. Senator Alfonse D'Amato has come close to achieving that goal with a bill that would make September 15th "Ethnic American Day." The bill honors "all Americans whose ancestors came from a foreign country."...

Another terrible decision by the Supreme Court: This one says the CIA does not have to disclose the names of researchers who participated in a CIA study of the control of human behavior, in which mind altering drugs were administered without the subject's knowledge. The court bought the CIA's argument that the researchers were "intelligence sources." Since they were obviously not "sources" in the ordinary sense—they were not Russian dissidents slipping us Soviet missile plans—the court appears to have given the CIA the broadest kind of authority to withold information from the public. Here is how Linda Greenhouse of *The New York Times* describes it:

"Under the ruling, information the agency says it needs to 'perform its statutory duties with respect to foreign intelligence' is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The exemption applies regardless of whether the information is shown to have a bearing on national security and regardless of whether the source of the information is a newspaper


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or magazine in general circulation.”. . .

After a lifetime of avoiding it, Mary McGrory finally got called for jury duty last month. The columnist’s conclusion: “I think it’s right up there with the town meeting as one of the great experiences in a democracy.” I agree. In the twenty or so trials I participated in while I was practicing law, the jury was never wrong. When I talk to people like Mary about their dominant impression of their fellow jurors, the words fair, conscientious, and common sense are repeated again and again. Of course there are some lemons, but on the whole my experience with juries has been like my experience with the Army in World War II and in the public schools of Charleston, West Virginia, giving me a bed-rock faith in democracy that my friends who haven’t had such experiences lack. . . .

Who gets unemployment compensation? What kind of people are they? Some, of course, are deserving. But there are others, as the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*’s Claudia Kuehl found out when she interviewed the people standing in line at the state unemployment office in Hollywood:

“The middle-aged actor beamed with affable complacency as he revealed that he earns about one hundred thousand dollars a year. . . .The man standing behind him, a director of television said he earns in excess of $50,000 a year.”

Kuehl also found an assistant director who made $75,000 a year and an actress who made $77,000 drawing compensation, as was a “casting director who used his unemployment benefits to pay his rent while he jetted off to Great Britain during a two-month hiatus from his duties.” Each of these worthies was being paid the maximum benefit, $166 a week, even though they didn’t need it, because their wages were high when they were working. On the other hand, someone who had low wages while working—like, say, a department store clerk—might get half that amount even though he or she desperately needed more. When are we going to end this insanity and start paying compensation on the basis of need and nothing else?. . . .

On the related issue of social security that is not needed, Roger Simon, a columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, recently wrote about a woman who decided she didn’t need the cost-of-living increase that she had gotten with her last social security check. She decided to let the United States Senate know her feelings, and sent letters to each of the hundred senators.

“Almost everyone who bothered to reply, about one third of the senators,” wrote Simon, “assured her that they would fight to the death to keep her social security benefits high and increasing”. . . .

Back for a moment to our friends at the bar. Rainmaking is not their only approach to the problem of revenue enhancement. The use of legal forms is another. When one has to draft a new will from scratch, the profit is not likely to be great. If, however, one can draw on tried and true paragraphs that have served other testators well, time is saved and revenues increase. Sometimes, a firm develops its own forms. Called “boilerplate,” they can be summoned up by a push of a button on a word processor and, in the case of those used for filings before federal agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission, can often produce staggering fees for minimal effort. Lawyers also use form books which they purchase from legal publishing firms. For example, I was recently sent a brochure advertising a book called *DWI Defense Forms* that features:

“Motion to strike prior convictions—author John A. Tarantino attacks the sticky problem of priors with an artfully drafted memorandum of law.

“Motions to suppress breath test results—five separate sets of motions, memoranda, affidavits, orders, and checklists are provided, each covering a different ground for suppression”. . . .

My candidate for The Most Unsurprising Headline of the year goes to this recent one from *The Washington Post*’s Real Estate section:

Builders Oppose
Tax Reform, Want
All Breaks to Stay. . . .

—*Charles Peters*


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# How the Democrats Learned to Love the Three-Martini Lunch

by Jonathan Rowe

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In the early 1960s, while the nation was opening its eyes to poverty in the "Other America," it was also discovering the way the wealthiest in the land were living high at the taxpayers' expense.

The "expense account scandal," *U. S. News and World Report* called it, and according to the Treasury, an estimated $1.5 billion per year was going untaxed. A rogues' gallery of well-to-do tax cheats appeared on the pages of the weekly newsmagazines: the undertaker who deducted $35,000 for maintaining a yacht on the grounds that he had to entertain clergymen and others in an atmosphere more pleasant than that of his mortuary; the businessman who deducted more than $8,000 for his daughters debut because it enabled him, he said, to meet the right people; and many others.

An Internal Revenue Service report regarding one especially adroit businessman captured the mood: "One thing is ever-present with this taxpayer," the report said. "A trip to Las Vegas, Nevada, Havana, Cuba, or some other place has always been opportune to attend some New Year's Day bowl game or other affairs, yet the trip was to see some concern about selling." An IRS study found that nearly half of all deductions involving travel and entertainment ("T & E") needed adjustment.

Under Eisenhower, the IRS had begun to tighten up its enforcement of these deductions, and when John F. Kennedy took office, he vowed to make tax cheating by the rich one of his crusades. "[T]he time has come," Kennedy said in a special message to Congress, "when our tax laws should cease their encouragement of luxury spending as a charge on the Federal Treasury. The slogan, 'It's Deductable' should pass from our scene."

Kennedy announced a tough package of reforms, including a cap on deductions for food and lodging on business travel and an end to deductions for yachts, hunting lodges, and other forms of recreation and entertainment. Closing these and other loopholes would finance a tax credit for new investment, said JFK. In effect, he was proposing to exchange loophole-induced waste for productive investment, and the whole endeavor reflected the spirit of his promise to "get the country moving again."

"All these World War II guys were coming to Washington," recalls Mortimer Caplan, Kennedy's IRS commissioner and now the lead partner in a prominent Washington tax law firm. "We were going to do it right—play it right down the middle." Kennedy personally visited the IRS to rally the troops—the first president ever to do so, Caplan says.

The beneficiaries of T & E were hardly pleased by the new gung-ho spirit in town. The Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union had warned that a crackdown would jeopardize the jobs of more than 100,000 members. A representative of the Dunes Hotel and gambling casino in Las Vegas complained that "it's the aggressive, successful businessman. . .who will be hurt the most." A New York saloon-keeper by the name of Andrew Ziomek, speaking for the National Licensed Beverage Association, warned that without the federal subsidy, business now conducted at taverns "will be relegated to hotel rooms and park benches."

The House weakened Kennedy's proposal, and at the urging of Democrats like Russell Long and Robert Kerr (as in the Kerr-McGee oil conglomerate), the Senate caved even further. "Watered down to the point where they had no impact," is how Gerard Brannon, a Treasury

*Jonathan Rowe is an editor of* The Washington Monthly. *Tony Fenwick provided research for this article.*

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> *Without tax-deductable entertainment, business now conducted in taverns 'will be relegated to hotel rooms and park benches.'*
>
> *—A spokesman for the National Licensed Beverage Association*

economist at the time, describes the resulting restrictions. Cabin cruisers, country club memberships, and the like could still be written off if used "primarily" for business purposes. A business person could still write off football or theater tickets as long as he talked business before or afterwards. And meals could be written off as long as the setting was "conducive to a business discussion," whether or not business was actually discussed.

The new law did, however, make more work for lawyers, who advised executives on the necessity of talking a little business before going off duck hunting. There were requirements for more record-keeping—a nuisance for most businesses but a cause of delight for at least one. A vice president of Diners Club called the IRS crackdown "tremendous." Company president Alfred Bloomingdale, who was a close friend of president-to-be Ronald Reagan's, explained: "We supply the records. The more records they need the better off we are."

## Pizza Huts vs. 'crown suites'

The hundred-dollar expense account lunch would seem to be just the kind of emotive issue that Democrats so desperately need today—a way of saying to the vast majority of Americans, "We're on your side." At a time when executive salaries are soaring, taxpayer-subsidized perks for these same overpaid individuals are a graphic symbol of an emerging class system in American life: those who pay their way and those who "write it off." It separates the people in the bleachers from those in the sky boxes, the families at Pizza Hut from the diners in the revolving restaurants atop the new office towers. The write-off class is reaching new levels of ostentation. *Common Cause* magazine recently detailed the "crown suites" at Dallas Cowboy football games (renting for $30,000 to $125,000 apiece), the $100 million spent on parties at the Superbowl, the competition between *Time* and *Newsweek* to throw the most lavish bash at the Republican and Democratic conventions. Much of this extravagance is subsidized by income tax deductions, and therefore by higher taxes from you and me.

Nobody knows exactly how much revenue is at stake, but it's clearly in the billions of dollars. James Mosher of the Medical Research Institute of San Francisco estimates that businesses purchase 12 percent of the retail alcohol in the country, and that the deductions for these purchases alone cost the Treasury up to $5 billion a year. Since this is money the government doesn't have, it really means that the nation is going deeper into debt to help pay for cocktails in the "crown suites."

This issue could appeal to those ethnic and white southern voters that the Democrats so desperately need to win back. While the party doyens are counseling "moderation," it's actually economic populism that appeals to this group. Vic Fingerhut, the pollster, found that between 60 and 70 percent of "Reagan Democrats" in nine northern states agreed with such populist themes as closing tax breaks for the rich.

There's also the matter of bureaucracy. Caplan calls the regulations relating to expense account living "horrendous" in their complexity, and the recordkeeping these require might be similarly described. Reform could relieve some of the burden of paperwork on the private sector. But the issue really reflects on the integrity of the tax system itself: how do you enforce all these regulations? Caplan conjures up the scene of an IRS auditor confronted with tens of thousands of expense vouchers and receipts at a single company like Xerox. Does he go through them one by one, track down the parties involved, and try to ascertain whether the executive vice present really discussed business before taking that associate and his wife to the Broadway show?

In practice, says Daniel Halperin, a Treasury attorney in the Carter administration, enforcement is "just impossible" and everybody knows


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it. The IRS's well-publicized manpower problems prompt the kind of open flouting of the law represented by advertisements promising tax-deductible vacations for executives and doctors in Hawaii or Vail. The vacationers view a videocassette lecture before taking off for a day on the beach or the slopes. (One ski seminar for business executives, sponsored by a company called Resorts Seminars of Snowmass Village, Colorado, featured a video lecture by Senator William Proxmire, the Senate's legendary skinflint.)

The tax-beaters know they will probably get away with it. "People are willing to play the audit lottery," a staff member of the House Ways and Means Committee concedes. This cynical attitude encourages cheating up and down the line.

Perhaps most important of all, cracking down on expense account living could be good for American business. The T & E industry grows apoplectic at this suggestion. Vincent Sardi, the owner of Sardi's restaurant in New York, once propounded that "breaking bread is a traditional way of doing business. It's in the Bible." "Put a guy you're doing a million-dollar deal with in a taxi and he's cold," says Irving "Swifty" Lazar, literary agent for Richard Nixon, Arthur Schlesinger, and others. "Put him in a limosine and he's warm. A customer has a sense of elation eating dinner at '21,' a feeling of gaiety going to a play. That's business, my friend."

But is it necessarily *good* business? After all, as Lazar lets on, the whole point of expense account living is not to enhance business judgment, but to diminish it. This is especially true when alcohol is involved. Numerous studies link excessive drinking to the use of alcohol on the job and the rise up the executive ranks. "How does it advance business to muddle the mind?" asks Rep. Andy Jacobs of Indiana, one of the few members of Congress who raises the issue today.

It's a free country, and people can drink if they want to. But should the government subsidize this behavior, especially on the all-important supply side?

In candid moments, even business people express reservations regarding expense account living. Caplan recalls that in the brouhaha surrounding the Kennedy proposals, a number of executives told him privately that while they were opposing the administration in public, they were grateful for the excuse to get tougher with their more profligate employees. In 1978, *Nation's Business*, a house organ of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, queried readers all over the country on the issue, and may have been surprised by some of the responses. "Business deals should be concluded in the office, where they belong," said the president of a company on Long Island. Even the assistant manager of the Golden Ox restaurant in Kansas City had reservations. "A man who makes a business transaction tends to profit by it," he wrote. "Why must government pay?"

Despite the high potential of three martini lunches as an issue, the Democrats aren't talking about it very much any more, just as they aren't talking much about broader populist themes. The much-maligned "special interests" are partly to blame; but it's also important to consider who the Democrats have become. If Democrats can't get too excited these days about fat cats dining at Le Pavillion at taxpayer expense, one of the reasons may be that some of those fat cats are themselves.

## *Let the kids diet*

When candidate Jimmy Carter deplored the "disgraceful" tax laws that let a business executive "charge off a $55 lunch. . . [while a] truck driver


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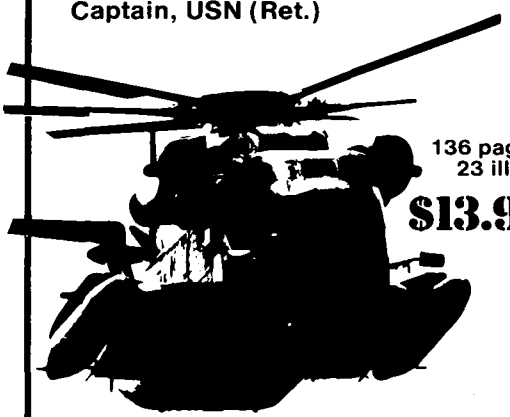

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cannot deduct his $1.50 sandwich," he seemed to be borrowing his lines from JFK. They touched a chord, and when he took office, Carter proposed cutting the deduction for "business" lunches in half and eliminating, among other things, the write-offs for club dues and entertainment.

The tales adduced from the IRS files in support of this proposal demonstrated that little had changed since the mild reforms of the early sixties. Moreover, a Roper poll found that 65 percent of the public backed the president on the issue. But Carter was no more successful than Kennedy had been; even his own party didn't take him seriously. There was a little tightening around the edges, but the expense account meals and most of the associated entertainment were safe. "There was no difference between Democrats and Republicans" on the issue, attorney Halperin recalls.

Since Carter left office, the Democrats haven't shown any greater enthusiasm for the issue. In 1981, for example, Senator Gary Hart proposed a bill that would have cut the deduction for expense account eating by 30 percent and used the revenues to help the school lunch program. It was a sensible proposal that could have underscored the different priorities of the two parties and dramatized the president's failure to ask any sacrifice of his country club friends. Only two senators cosponsored the measure; when Hart introduced it as an amendment to other legislation, the bill mustered but 30 votes, suggesting that it probably would not have carried even if the Democrats controlled the chamber. Meanwhile, Democrats in the House were busy putting together their "alternative" to the president's tax cut bill, which contained delights for just about every interest group under the sun—including the ones that consume those expense account lunches

In 1984, Congressman Pete Stark, a Democrat of California, won approval of a limitation on write-offs for luxury cars. But by and large, the issue has been slipping quietly out of sight, at least on the Democratic side. It no longer appears in the alternative budget of the Congressional Black Caucus, nor was it mentioned in the 58 single-spaced pages of the 1984 Democratic platform.

Part of the problem is the restaurant, hotel, liquor, and kindred industries—the three-martini complex— which have lined up solidly behind the deductible lunch. To be sure, not every utterance of this group has been a master stroke of public relations. The National Restaurant Association contended during the Carter years that the typical business lunch consisted of a hamburger or sandwich, french fries, vegetable, and salad, all for $3.98. According to George Will, the head of the 400,000-member Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union once called the deductability of expense account entertainment a "human rights" issue. But the industry has both money and clout. Excise taxes on beer and wine, for example, have not been increased since 1951, and in 1984 dollars, the tax on wine is sixteen cents per gallon, compared to seventy-nine cents at the height of the Depression. The industry has also learned how to touch the right buttons. "What bothers me," said an executive from the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, "[is that] it's the hospitality industry, the largest employer of unskilled labor in the U.S.

This argument carries special weight with the Democrats when it comes from the union, even though workers in other industries have little reason to want to subsidize the bosses' lunches. But like the Democrats, the labor movement has constituency problems. Asked about the three-martini lunch issue, Murray Seeger, a spokesman for the AFL-CIO, said, "We would never touch it," adding how important the restaurant workers' union is to the federation. Thus organized labor finds itself on the side of one of the more egregious forms of trickle-down economics in the land. Taxpayers underwrite luxury lunches so the busboys get to cart away the dishes. (The labor movement's adamant defense of tax-free fringe benefits is another boost for T & E deductions: "There's a feeling that [those deductions] are part of the fringe benefits issue, and that makes members wary," a House staff person said.)

## *A small glass, too*

The restaurant industry, one of the few that does not face foreign competition, is a dubious candidate for government subsidy. Besides, does anyone really believe that Swifty Lazar would try to clinch that million-dollar deal on a park bench over a brown-bag lunch if he couldn't pass along half his tab to the taxpayers? The Congressional Research Service determined that the restaurant industry would continue to grow more rapidly than the economy as a whole even if Carter's reforms were enacted. At most, reducing the deduction might force very elegant restaurants to lower their prices somewhat, which is how free enterprise is supposed to work. It's hard to see how the fate of either the labor movement or the


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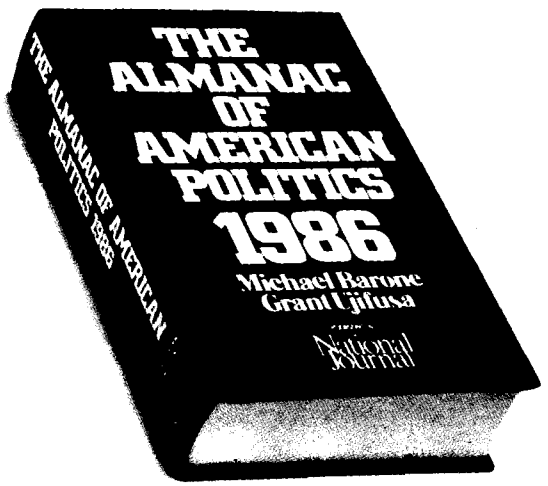


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economy as a whole hinges on the ability of the Ritz to charge $3.50 for a glass of orange juice. And even if some business people did eat out less often, those dollars wouldn't fall into the ocean. They'd be spent on something else, which would mean jobs and potential union members in other industries.

## *Shmoozing with the 'little guys'*

There is more at work here than the organized self-interest of the three-martini complex and its employees. Perhaps equally important is the culture of Washington, the Democratic establishment in particular, and the "prestige press" which is its reference point and mirror. These are not people who eat in cheap cafeterias. When you talk about expense account lunches, you are hitting Washington where it lives.

There were hints of this in the way the media responded to Carter's proposals to cut expense account deductions. Editorially, the *Washington Post* supported the president, but in some quarters there was bemusement and condescension. A prime example was *Time* magazine, where the issue is of more than passing interest. "The expense account meal stretches an executive's time," the magazine protested in a news story, possibly with a Time Inc. executive in mind. In a column entitled "In Defense of the Martini," Hugh Sidey chided the Georgia bumpkin in the White House. "Many suspect a religious and regional predjudice," Sidey wrote. "His experience is limited; almost everybody in his time in Plains ate lunch at home."

As important as their editorial positions is the role of the media as a participant on the Washington scene. "Ten years ago you'd seldom see a reporter in a high end restaurant," a Washington attorney told *Common Cause* magazine. "Now you can't keep them out." Journalists with major publications and networks command considerable respect in Washington. In Democrats' eyes, the press is vaguely sympathetic—certainly sophisticated and stylish. When journalists join in the expense account feasting, it reinforces a sense that such activity is acceptable, even expected

A good many in the Democratic establishment are themselves part of this expense account world. Walk into any of Washington's finer restaurants at noontime, and you are likely to find, elbow-to-elbow with the bankers and trade association executives, the chieftains of the party of the little man. For example, you might see Democratic lobbyist-fundraisers such as Tommy Boggs and Bob Strauss dining with oil industry clients (they'll probably be independents, the "little guys"). When Strauss took over the Democratic National Committee after the McGovern debacle in 1972, he buried its prodigious list of 600,000 small, direct-mail contributors and deliberately oriented the party towards wealthy givers like his law firm's clients. You also might see former DNC Chairman Chuck Manatt, a prominent lawyer whom Ralph Nader calls "a man for all seasons—all four of them" for his proclivity for dining at expensive establishments such as the posh Washington hotel by that name. There will probably be some labor leaders, as well as a Democratic senator or senior congressman lunching with a lobbyist. The lobbyist might be paying.

Early last March, 140 House Democrats boarded a chartered train for a much publicized weekend at the pricey Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to discuss the future of their party. There was much dismay in party circles at revelations that General Motors, Exxon, and other large corporations, which had representatives in attendance, footed much of the $150,000 bill. Rep. Richard Gephardt, a main conference organizer and emerging House leader, seemed surprised at this reaction, and in a way, his surprise is understandable. At the Greenbrier, the Democrats were only doing collectively what many of them have been doing individually for years.

Back in Washington, there are ample opportunities for Congressmen to avail themselves of the tax-deductible expense account world. Not all partake, but many do.

Consider, for example, the Democratic-controlled House Ways and Means Committee, which writes the tax laws, including those pertaining to deductible T & E. it may come as no surprise that Ways and Means is a center of the action, and Dan Rostenkowski, the committee chairman, has set the pace. Between November 1981 and April 1982, *The Washington Post* reported, Rostenkowski "spent at least 45 days as a guest of various trade associations, corporations and individuals at such resorts as Florida's Doral Country Club and Boca Raton Hotel and Club," and others. Rostenkowski's hosts picked up his airfare and expenses totaling $10,000 and—either themselves or through affiliates—provided him with $15,000 in campaign contributions. Rostenkowski is not known in the corridors of Congress as a man with an itch to limit ex-


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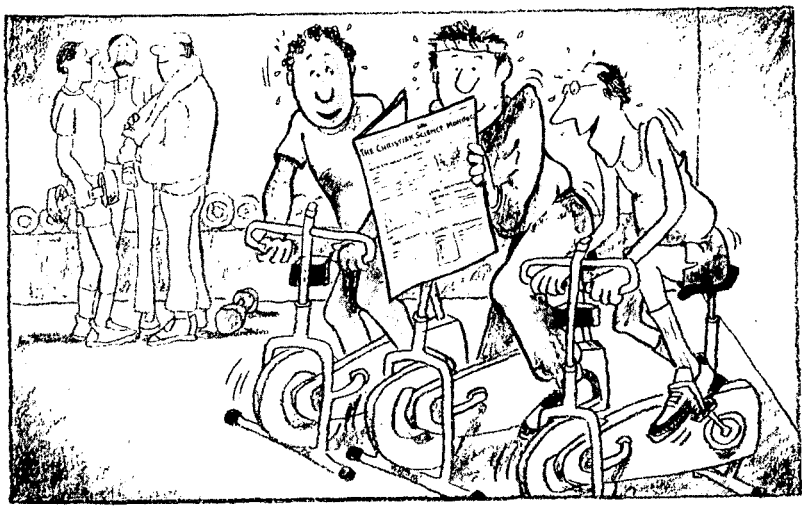

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pense account deductions.

In the more mundane realm of Washington freebies, House members refer to lobbyists who buy them dinner as "live ones" and "angels," as in "I'm meeting a live one at Duke Ziebert's tonight." Even House staff get their share. While disclosing Rostenkowski's business-funded golf vacations the *Post* also revealed similar excursions accorded the top Ways and Means staff. In one case, a lobbyist for Nevada gambling casinos arranged for Harrah's at Lake Tahoe to pay for a five-day trip by a senior staff member, James Healy, and his wife and two children. The purpose, the lobbyist said later, was to demonstrate to Healy that casinos are not "something out of a George Raft movie where black-shirted individuals speak in 'dese and dose and dems.'" To impart this knowledge, the hotel paid more than $3,000 in air fare, rooms and meals.

In another episode, a lobbyist arranged for Healy and a fellow senior staff member to visit offshore mining operations in the Gulf of Mexico. The trip also included seats in the governor's box at the New Orleans Superdome for the semifinals of the NCAA basketball tournament and dinner at Antoine's. "I felt that it was worthwhile for my staff to go down and see just what the technicians would be telling us," Rostenkowski explained.

For line staff, there is lunch, of course, and dinner, theater, baseball games, ballet, weekend conferences at fashionable resorts as well. The long battle over life insurance taxation last year was something of a movable feast. On one occasion, a lobbyist for the American Council of Life Insurance took a whole group of staff to the Washington premiere of "Return of the Jedi." "The staff got as used to going downtown as the members did," a former House staff member recalls. "I was taken out all the time." Said another, "It's disgusting."

## *Quality Time*

It would be naive to think that members of congress—Democrats or Republicans—or their staffs are bought off on particular issues by fancy dinners and golf week-ends. But these occasions work in subtle ways to acculturate a congressman and dull his zeal for reform. Issues become personalized, identified with warm times in congenial surroundings—with people who, unlike many constituents, show the congressman the respect he feels he deserves. There's a natural tendency to want to be invited back. Lobbyists can become a kind of peer group for those who associate with them too often.

At a simpler level, these occasions tend to preempt a congressman's or staff member's time. "An hour on a plane trip together" with a lobbyist is "as significant as them spending 20 days together in Washington" was how Rostenkowski's staff explained the business purpose of the chairman's outings. Tax reform advocates like the young lawyers from Nader don't get quality time like that; more likely, they are squeezed in for 20 minutes on a hot and hectic day. Instead of sitting at Scholl's Cafeteria discussing how to eliminate the worst real estate tax shelters, staff might be out addressing the syndicators.

One staff member recalls a week-end seminar at a Virginia mountain resort that a prominent lobbyist arranged for the real estate interests he represented. Staff went along—with their spouses—to address the gathering. "Our job—this was unspoken but it was clearly there—was to scare the pants off these people concerning what Congress might do to them next year, so they'd feel they had to hire this lobbyist again," this staff member said. Providing dire warnings of what's ahead, the staff members get to feel virtuous about their free week-end away, just as congressmen get to feel they have earned their trips to Boca Raton and honoraria when they give a twenty minute speech to an interest group there. "They make you feel valued, like you are somebody important," a staff member said.

Whatever the impact of these pleasant experiences upon one's actual positions on issues, T & E becomes a routine part of life for people on the Hill. "It's just the way its done," a staff member says. "You begin to forget that there is anything wrong with it." Representative Jacobs recalls a Ways and Means mark-up session in the mid-seventies at which a Republican offered a proposal to prohibit lobbyists from deducting the cost of entertaining members of Congress. The idea was not greeted with enthusiasm; one Democrat in particular tried to "laugh it out of committee" by adding silly amendments, Jacobs recalls. Finally, the committee voted it down.

Another example was the attempt by Congress in 1981 to vote itself a pay raise by the subterfuge of allowing members almost limitless deductions for their Washington living expenses, even if they maintained no residence in their home district. In effect, members declared their whole life a deductible business expense of close to $20,000 a year. When the press caught on to this


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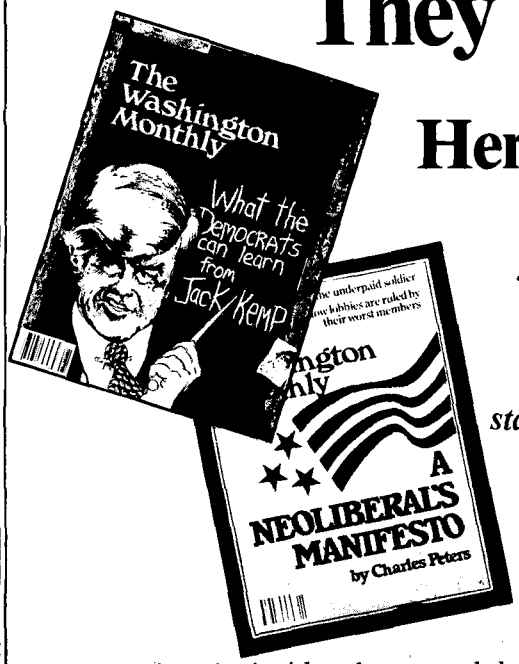


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maneuver, there was the predictable outcry, and Congress backed down. But since they had made the law retroactive, the members had one year's worth of deductions safely in hand.

## *Lessons from Russell Long*

Democrats are hardly the only party in Washington that enjoys the T & E circuit and has seen to its preservation. But as the long-time majority in the House, they've had more than their share of the providers' attention. And as the "party of the people," this attention has been most dangerous. Somehow, the party leaders have come to think that "policy" is disconnected from where they get their money and how they spend their time; that what they stand for is disconnected from what they do, and that a weekend at the Greenbrier at corporate expense is not going to show up somewhere in the bottom line.

You see this disjunctive thinking when a Walter Mondale sets himself up to earn almost $1.5 million in legal retainers, consulting fees, and fees for sitting on corporate boards during the three years preceding his run for the presidency [see "How Mondale Makes His Money," June 1984]. You see it when the party that began the Peace Corps and Vista lets the Republicans make "volunteerism" their own issue. Forgetting the link between collective and individual virtue—between policy and practice—Democrats seem to see the former solely in terms of government programs; it is almost an act of disloyalty to speak of people trying to solve problems on their own.

The bottom line does speak, however. It did so in the special-interest smorgasbord called the Democrat's 1981 tax bill. It seems about to speak again on tax simplification—a great populist issue. Simplifying the tax laws would get the government off our backs by relieving us of the chore of serving as bookkeepers and accountants for the IRS. It would help stop special interest tax finagling because once the room is clean, every speck of dust will show. At least some Republicans see the potential. "This could do for Republicans what Social Security did for the Democrats," says Jeff Bell, the Republican strategist who opposed Bill Bradley for the Senate seat in New Jersey the first time around. It is "something that every voter can benefit from."

Democrats Bradley and—to his credit—Gephardt seem to understand this, having introduced a simplification bill of their own. Rostenkowski, also to his great credit, seems determined to redeem himself by taking the right side on the issue. But a cadre of Democrats, including Tony Coelho, the chief fundraiser for the party in the House, have been ambulance chasing among potential victims of tax reform in the oil and gas, real estate, and other industries. They may cost the party the opportunity to make the tax simplification issue its own.

You don't want to think the Republicans really believe the populist rhetoric some of them are spouting. Yet, in 1982, it was Senator Bob Dole, then chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, who secured an amendment, in the wee hours after the lobbyists had gone home, to cut in half the deduction for expense account living. Dole's record on the issue is not unblemished, but he compares quite favorably to his Democratic predecessor, Russell Long, who helped undo the Kennedy reforms. "What's all this nonsense about the three-martini lunch?" Long demanded of Michael Blumenthal, Carter's Treasury secretary, at a committee hearing. "Look, the next time you see the president, tell him this: Senator Long says that entertainment is to sales what fertilizer is to agriculture—it increases the yield." Dole's amendment was dropped in conference with the House. But last November the Republicans were at it again; the Reagan Treasury Department issued a draft tax reform proposal that hit T & E deductions in a way reminiscent of the Kennedy proposals of the sixties: deductions would be limited to $10 per person for breakfast, $15 for lunch, and $25 for dinner, including tax and tip. Deductions for entertainment would be abolished. The plan would have done a Democrat proud.

And so would the speech given in Washington on April 15—tax day—by a prominent public official. "The overwhelming majority of taxpayers eat lunch without being able to deduct their meals as business expenses," this official said. "They buy baseball or hockey tickets without being able to enjoy the luxury of business-related sky boxes. They talk on fishing boats, but they don't take the deduction for cruise seminars." This individual was not a Democrat. It was Richard Darman, deputy secretary of the treasury, as buttoned-down and blue-suited a Republican as you will find. Apparently, the deliberations at the Greenbrier did not include lines like that.

The Republicans are not the party of the people yet; a Treasury speech does not make a realignment, and you don't see the bankers and executives jumping the GOP ship. But with the Democrats' help, it's at least becoming a contest. ■



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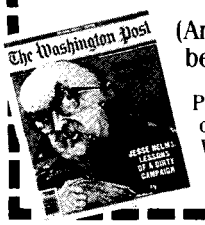


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Pictured above in a 1949 AP wirephoto of a Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations fact-finding tour are on horseback from left to right: Mrs. Ferguson and Sen. Homer Ferguson, Sen. Allen Ellender, Sen. Theodore F. Green, Earl Cooper of the State Dept. and Sen. William E. Jenner with their Dragomen guides at the Great Pyramid.

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# WHO'S WHO in the Administration

Leaving the BMW and Bitburg messes in his wake, **Michael Deaver** finally left his post as deputy chief of staff at the White House for greener pastures in corporate public relations. Deaver wanted to have his big White House farewell party in the presidential residence rather than the Roosevelt Room, which is customarily used for such affairs. His request was referred to **Nancy Reagan.** The answer from the first lady: the Roosevelt Room will be just fine....One thing that can't be blamed on Deaver was the intial decision not to visit a concentration camp. White House insiders say that Nancy Reagan vetoed the stop because it made her feel "squeamish"...Not wasting any time, Deaver was already showing signs last month of making the transition to the private sector. When the president was walking recently through the Diplomatic Reception Room on his way to catch a Marine helicopter, Deaver rushed up to intercept Reagan and introduce a new friend—the corporate chief of Toyota. Neither a Seiko nor a $1,000 bill was involved, but it will be interesting to see which PR firm gets Toyota's new Washington business...There was widespread speculation in the administration that **Richard Burt's** appointment to be ambassador to West Germany was engineered by his arch enemy at Defense, **Richard Perle.** Why would Perle do Burt the favor? To get Burt out of Washington and away from real authority, of course. A classic ploy of veteran bureaucrats, of whom Perle is one, is to dangle a new and glamorous-sounding job in front of their rivals' eyes. Burt, less wiley in the ways of Washington and under the impression that the Bonn post will improve his resume for the secretary of state's chair, jumped for Perle's bait and in doing so left the field of battle. A clue to whether the fix is on will come if some Senate right-wingers vote for Burt on a close roll call he might otherwise lose....The first round of arms negotiations are over in Geneva, and our sources tell us that the U.S. team has its priorities fully straightened out. American negotiators are spending 90 percent of their time jockeying for choice accomodations in the scenic Swiss city. Of secondary importance is fighting over the pecking order around the negotiating table and for influence with officials back at State and Defense. The talks themselves come in a distant third place.

## In

WHITE HOUSE

Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Public Affairs—**William B. Lacy** has been director of political operations for the Republican National Committee.

Deputy Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs—**Mitchell E. Daniels Jr.** has been executive director of the Republican Senatorial Committee.

Deputy Director of the Office of Public Liaison— **Linda L. Arey** has been executive secretary to the Transportation Department.

JUSTICE

Acting Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust—**Charles F. Rule** has been deputy assistant attorney general.

Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights—**Mark R. Disler** has been general counsel of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

STATE

Deputy Secretary—**John C. Whitehead** has been cochairman of Goldman, Sachs and Co.

Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs—**Elliot Abrams** has been assistant secretary for human rights.

TREASURY

Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy—**Ronald A. Pearlman** has been deputy assistant secretary for tax policy.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities—**Edward A. Curran** has been deputy director of the Peace Corps.

Director, National Security Agency— **Lt. Gen. William E. Odom** has been chief of Intelligence for the Army.

## Out

WHITE HOUSE

Deputy Director of the Office of Public Liaison—**Frank J. Donatelli** is joining the law firm of Patton, Boggs & Blow.

EDUCATION

Policy Adviser—**Eileen M. Gardner** has resigned.

Policy Adviser—**Lawrence A. Uzzell** has resigned.

JUSTICE

Solicitor General—**Rex E. Lee** has resigned to become a partner in the Washington office of the law firm of Sidley & Austin.

Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust— **J. Paul McGrath** has resigned to return to the New York law firm of Dewey, Ballantine, Bushby, Palmer & Wood.

STATE

Deputy Secretary—**Kenneth Dam** has resigned and will become vice president of IBM.

Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs—**Langhorn A. Motley** has resigned.

TREASURY

Assistant Secretary for Domestic Finance—**Thomas J. Healey** has resigned and will become vice president of Goldman, Sachs and Co.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Director, National Security Agency—**Lincoln D. Faurer** has resigned.



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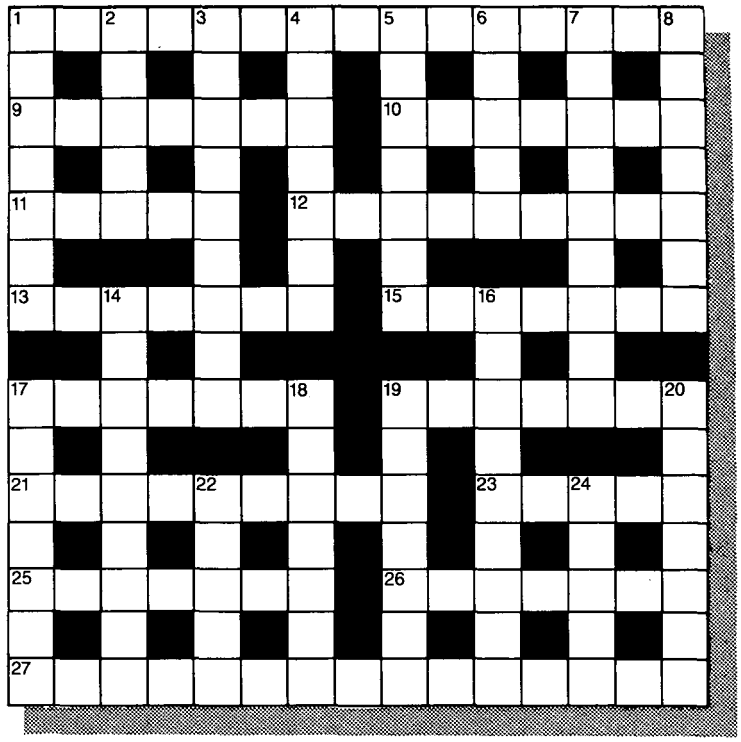
# POLITICAL PUZZLE

## by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.



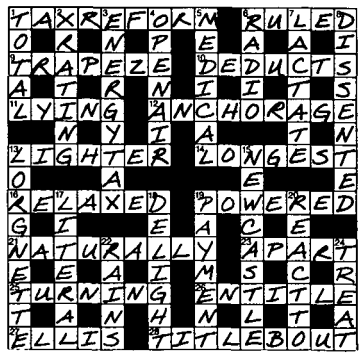
### ACROSS

1. Warrant requirements recklessly foment AM thunder. (6, 9)
9. Royal booter restored Clemente. (7)
10. Storage device for Beau Brummel? (7)
11. All Simon developed are two Atlanta arenas. (5)
12. When life is tough, read Smith translation. (4, 5)
13. Always links phrase with short version. (7)
15. Hangs on diving areas, we hear. (7)
17. Error in original takes Rita back in humorous way. (7)
19. A light sleeper rewords clumsily. (7)
21. Need a gift wrapped? Smashing! (9)
23. Cleverly snare rates. (5)
25. Vision in which Joachim erases blackboard. (7)
26. Helps one caught between donkey and short streets. (7)
27. Item from a bill upsets their smart Garbo. (5, 2, 4, 4)

### DOWN

1. Send prompt letter when pilot light goes out? (4, 3)
2. Rub the wrong way an early Pope. (5)
3. Voters run erratically for releases. (5, 4)
4. Extra-different on heart. (7)
5. Mixed red dune lasted longest. (7)
6. Inhabited obscene reversal before tea. (5)
7. Steam seen around passageways. (9)
8. Drives down main roads? (7)
14. Approving, if tiny rag is straightened out. (9)
16. Mixed spores for declarer. (9)
17. Cocktail for cyclist? (7)
18. Fashionable past for city. (7)
19. Erode jagged edge around rising patriotic society. (7)
20. Fights sisters unfairly. (7)
22. Responsive art takes in the French. (5)
24. One runs stumbling over the stair part. (5)

*Answers to last month's puzzle:*





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# SAVING NEW YORK'S SUBWAYS

By Jonathan Alter

One day in late 1983, Bob Kiley and Dave Gunn took a trip to Coney Island. Kiley was the newly appointed head of New York's huge Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which moves more than a third of the people in the United States who use public transportation. Gunn was the man Kiley was trying to convince that day to head the Transit Authority (TA), which runs New York City's vast bus and subway system. Coney Island is the home of a large TA repair yard.

When Kiley and Gunn arrived, they didn't see employees drinking, sleeping, or fixing private automobiles on government time—infractions cited in countless reports and investigations over the years. But they did notice workers stripping down the undercarriages of subway cars and rebuilding them with the same nuts and bolts and other components they had just taken out. Watching this, Kiley said later, was like undergoing a heart transplant only to wake up to discover that the doctor had put your old damaged heart back in place. I thought of it in more mundane terms—standing, sweating, in a motionless subway car and being told that the train would be delayed for an hour in the middle of a tunnel because of unexplained "mechanical difficulties."

Part of the problem at Coney Island is that the repair shops can't get the right tools and parts. The huge inventory system is only partly computerized and has a backlog a mile long. But Kiley and Gunn discovered something more fundamentally wrong: of 1,000 employees at the 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week Coney Island facility, only one reported to TA management rather than to the union. *One man* to take responsibility. The result of that wasn't hard to figure out. Kiley and Gunn learned that even if you included cars reassembled with worn-out parts, the yard would complete only 40 overhauls by the end of the year—28 percent of the yard's modest objective.

In other words, "MTA management" had become an oxymoron. Of the 49,000 TA workers in 1983, 300 were accountable to management. The only way to get subways fixed at Coney Island and to save the system as a whole from complete deterioration, Kiley and Gunn concluded, was for them to be able to hire, fire, and promote high-level supervisors on the basis of their performance. And the only way to do that was to break the grip of the civil service.

## Kamakazi bureaucrats

"They call it the merit system, but nothing could be further from the truth," says Kiley. "By squeezing out the evils of Boss Tweed they have squeezed out everything else—reduced everything to the lowest common denominator, which is a recipe for sleepiness." Regular readers of this magazine will be familiar with that sentiment. The new twist is that Kiley and Gunn are not journalists or former bureaucrats with an idealistic notion of how to make government work

*Jonathan Alter is an associate editor at* Newsweek *and a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.



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**'MTA management' had become an oxymoron, and the only way to save the system was to break the grip of the civil service.**

better. They are men with long experience in mass transit, who learned their civil service lessons the hard way. Now they are betting their not inconsiderable reputations that a diagnosis at odds with a generation of liberalism and conventional notions of "merit" will help cure what ails New York's subways.

Kiley and Gunn must have the most second-guessed jobs in America. Every straphanger can tell them how to do it better, not to mention the unions; the newspapers; and Mario Cuomo and Ed Koch, who are always at pains to point out that the MTA, and not they, bears responsibility for the system's desperate condition. Each day brings a new "suicide mission," as Gunn called the job before agreeing to take it. The Transit Workers Union (TWU) insists on arbitration on its new contract; the Reagan administration slashes mass transit grants; Congress subpoenas testimony about millions of federal dollars spent on faulty Grumman-built buses; the federal regulators scream about the hundreds of track fires discovered each month; citizens' groups protest possible fare increases.

Kiley felt the added pressure of his predecessor's legacy. Richard Ravitch had devoted most of his time to raising $8 billion to finance capital improvements. It was a last-ditch crusade to breathe life back into the subways; Kiley knew that without effective management the money would be flushed away. So despite all the problems confronting the system, and all the constituencies demanding attention, civil service reform became the principal objective of Kiley's first year and the foundation upon which future improvements would be built.

Remarkably, by the end of their first year in office, Kiley and Gunn had accomplished most of what they sought—and had forged an acceptable compromise on the rest. If the subways aren't tangibly better, management is at least in a position where there is some hope of improvement. To win this fight, Kiley and Gunn had to convince a lot of other people that the old "merit" system wasn't working. Maybe their example can help other state and local governments—not to mention the federal system—where civil service holds the same sway. If other agencies don't heed the lesson of the MTA soon, they could end up looking like the Broadway Number 3.

## Me? I snip wicks

Before laying out the civil service story, it's only fair to mention that I'm basically a fan of the New York subway system. It often produces an unpleasant ride, particularly compared to Washington's Metro, but you get used to it. While the rich and the faint-at-heart sit in their limousines and taxis (when they can get them), crawling uptown in excruciating midday traffic, the subway usually takes you exactly where you want to go, and faster. During the daytime it's almost always the best way to get around the city, mainly because of its size. New York has 6,150 cars running on 230 miles of track. By comparison, Philadelphia, where Gunn ran the subway system, has 375 cars on 24 miles of track, and Boston's MBTA, which Kiley headed in the mid-1970s, has 392 cars on 30 miles of track.

The problem is that because you expect the subway to get you there faster and cheaper—and you plan your schedule around it—the anger at not getting there on time is all the greater. Last year New York riders experienced 61,000 train delays, twice as many as ten years ago. Meanwhile, crime has corroded the system. The fear of being mugged haunts subway riders in a way



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completely unknown years ago. There were 14,001 felonies committed in 1984 (up from 948 in 1960). As crime has risen, ridership—particularly among the middle class—has dropped, which in turn has caused crime to rise faster (the fewer passengers in a station, the easier it is to rob someone). The Lexington line may seem crowded at rush hour, but parts of the system rattle around nearly empty. In 1946, the peak year (just before the fare doubled from a nickel), two billion passengers rode the subways; last year the number fell below one billion for the first time since 1917.

The complete story of the decline of the subways is a subject for a different article. But a few little-known developments hastened the process more than is generally realized. In 1968, the MTA established a pension plan that allows employees to retire at half pay after 20 years—just as in the military. As a result, by 1970, 70 percent of the skilled workers in the car maintenance department had decided to pack it in. These were the men—Irish mostly—whose families had built and maintained the system in this century. Almost overnight, they were gone, replaced by people who were paid better but knew less. Then, during New York's fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s, the MTA reduced maintenance manpower, although conductors, booth agents, and administrators were not cut. Between 1973 and 1979 the hours worked in the car maintenance department dropped by 33 percent; between 1974 and 1976, training hours were down 77 percent. The brand new R-44 trains went only 6,000 miles between breakdowns—far worse than the R-17s which had been in service for 26 years.

The Richard Ravitch administration of the early 1980s didn't have time to worry about all that. It had its hands full raising money. But before leaving, the old regime did succeed in one management change that had far-reaching consequences. In April 1982 an arbitrator sided with the MTA and eliminated work quotas. Originally favored by management as a way to get workers to complete jobs in specified amounts of time—a certain track replacement, say, should take only five-and-a-half hours—the quotas evolved into an excuse for employees to spend their afternoons bowling. After the five-and-a-half hour job was completed, the workers would leave—for the day.

But eliminating work quotas was only a beginning. Kiley and Gunn had hundreds of other work rules to contend with. Flagmen are still paid time-and-a-half, for instance, to clean the lenses and trim the wicks of kerosene lamps, which haven't been used underground for five years

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Sinclair explores, among other things, the vast discrepancies between California and Arizona farmers who reap huge profits with the help of generous federal irrigation and loans, and bankrupt competitors in Kansas and North Dakota who receive much less government assistance. Sinclair fuses the human drama of lost livelihoods to the complex economic causes of farm failures: reckless borrowing and lending, unpredictable international trade cycles, and tax shelters and production regulations that distort markets.

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'The trains on the subway are run by a) gasoline, b) electricity, c) diesel oil, d) butane gas?'

— question from the MTA supervisors exam

(why such 19th-century instruments were being used even then is beyond comprehension). Before getting to all of that, though, Kiley and Gunn had to tackle the more basic accountability issue. What good did it do to tell a man he couldn't leave work in the middle of the day if you had no way of enforcing it?

The reason nothing could be enforced was that the supervisors throughout the system—the men responsible for productivity—owed their allegiance not to MTA management but to the Subway Surface Supervisors Association (SSSA) and other unions. Supervisors were promoted not on the basis of whether they met productivity goals but by competitive examination. Kiley and Gunn found that even the best tests cannot tell you anything about how well a manager performs his job.

And these tests are not the best. The exams, says MTA spokesman Art Perfall, are "either really silly stuff or the kind of technical material that has nothing at all to do with managing people." Question 13 on a test for one group of foremen asked: "The trains on the subway are run by (a) gasoline, (b) electricity, (c) diesel oil, (d) butane gas?" Question 21 asked, "In making a report of an accident on a stairway from the mezzanine to the street at a subway station, the LEAST important of the following items to include is the (a) date, (b) weather, (c) time of day, (d) number of steps in the stair. Another test included a floor plan of a one-story frame structure and a series of tricky questions about the measurements. About the closest any question that I saw came to trying to gauge management ability was one about how to handle the presence of "the grapevine." My favorite among the wrong answers was (c): "purposely feed incorrect information into the grapevine in order to discredit the system."

## Plan B: create titles

Kiley decided to fight his battle publicly. "Given a 30-year history of management out of control, it would have been utterly futile for me to come in as a rank outsider and say, 'Why don't we go in the back room and see what we can work out?' " he recalls. "God does not give us much time. . . .There was no substitute for getting very public very early."

In a February 1984 speech to the Association for a Better New York, Kiley announced that he would ask the mayor, the governor, and the legislature to let him begin restoring accountability. Without hearing any specifics, the State Public Employees Conference, which represents more than a million public sector employees, accused Kiley of union-baiting. But six weeks later the MTA went ahead and issued a three-point "Management Reform Program."

The first and least controversial element was called "broadbanding." Under the existing system, TA employees interested in moving from hourly work into "management" advanced to the first supervisory level on the basis of the exams mentioned earlier. Kiley and Gunn proposed to keep that practice but scrap the exam for all further advancement. Promotion to the second level of supervision would be based instead on performance. If the supervisors didn't succeed at higher level supervision, Kiley and Gunn sought to reserve the right to send them back down to the minors. This change required the approval



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only of the New York City Department of Personnel. Mayor Koch backed the idea, and it was quickly adopted.

The second part of the plan involved a standard bureaucratic maneuver: creating titles. Usually this is done so that bureaucrats can move into higher classifications (for example, to qualify for a bigger salary, a secretary convinces her boss to reclassify her as "public liaison specialist"). But Kiley created more than 1,100 new "superintendents" for a different reason: to give management more control. The TA would be able to reward ambition within the agency and hire more qualified people from the outside. More important, the new positions would be "noncompetitive," a word that sounds bad but actually is good. Selection would be based on performance rather than on seniority or competitive examination. This change also was approved last year by the city, and, interestingly, by the state civil service commission. It helped that the members of the state civil service commission are political appointees rather than protected civil servants.

## Mario the meek

It was the third element of the reform proposal that caused the trouble. Kiley and Gunn wanted the state legislature to pass a law excluding supervisors and managers from collective bargaining, which is a polite way of saying that they wanted to put the supervisors union out of business. This was in many ways the most important part of the reform plan. How could 95 percent of the agency's managers be union members? To Kiley and Gunn, it was nonsensical.

The unions went nuts. Not just the Subway Surface Supervisors Association—whose existence was threatened—but the huge Transit Workers Union, which represents the bulk of TA employees. TWU chief John Lawe said the real problem wasn't unionized supervisors but flabby top management. Gunn had made the mistake of hiring several administrators from Philadelphia for salaries approaching six figures—twice what some had made before moving to New York. Gunn himself made $140,000; Kiley, $150,000. Lawe's attack highlighted management's failure to tighten its own belt while asking subordinates to sacrifice.

Also leading the resistance was the MTA's inspector general, Sidney Schwartz, who previously had gotten himself in the papers almost every week with some report of malfeasance at a TA facility. Schwartz could not seem to grasp the importance of making supervisors accountable to management. He suggested that Kiley's plan be reviewed by the State Public Employee Relations Board—the same board that had bestowed collective bargaining privileges on the supervisors union in the first place.

Of course Kiley didn't surrender. John Michaels, president of the SSSA, said later that Kiley's ability to sell the three daily newspapers on his reform proposals was critical to the outcome. But Kiley also had to overcome a huge obstacle on this third proposal, and his name was Mario Cuomo. Cuomo's own problem was spelled L-A-B-O-R. The governor vigilantly maintains good relations with public employee unions and apparently felt he had to draw the line somewhere on the MTA reforms. "When I first went to Cuomo and said we had very serious structural problems, he didn't bat an eyelash, until decertification of the unions came up," Kiley recalls. "He didn't ever argue that a supervisor's union was a good thing, but he wanted to see if we could work it out without legislation."

For most of 1984 that didn't seem like much of an option. Michaels considered the two sides "at war." The SSSA wasn't going to negotiate itself out of business; Kiley wasn't going to give up on restructuring the agency, and Cuomo wasn't going to risk antagonizing labor any more than he had to. But finally, in late summer, it became clear to Kiley that the realities of New York politics were such that he wasn't going to get legislation. "I spent some time in Albany talking to the [assembly] leadership. They said, 'We'll take our cues on this one from the governor.' If we'd really tried to go for broke on it, it would have been very rancorous." Shortly thereafter, Kiley ran into Michaels, then executive director of the SSSA, at an office retirement party and tentatively suggested that the two sides begin to talk directly, rather than through the governor's labor mediator.

The early negotiations were not encouraging. "The first couple of meetings lasted 10 or 15 minutes," Michaels recalls. "They essentially said, 'Here's a gun. Go ahead and commit suicide.' " But as time wore on, Thomas Hartnett, Cuomo's mediator, began to sense that progress was possible. By some accounts, it began after the Mondale debacle in November, when Cuomo, suddenly a major national figure, may have realized it was time to put a little distance between himself and labor. "By Christmastime," says one person familiar with the negotiations, "Hartnett was telling the unions they had to make a deal." Hart-


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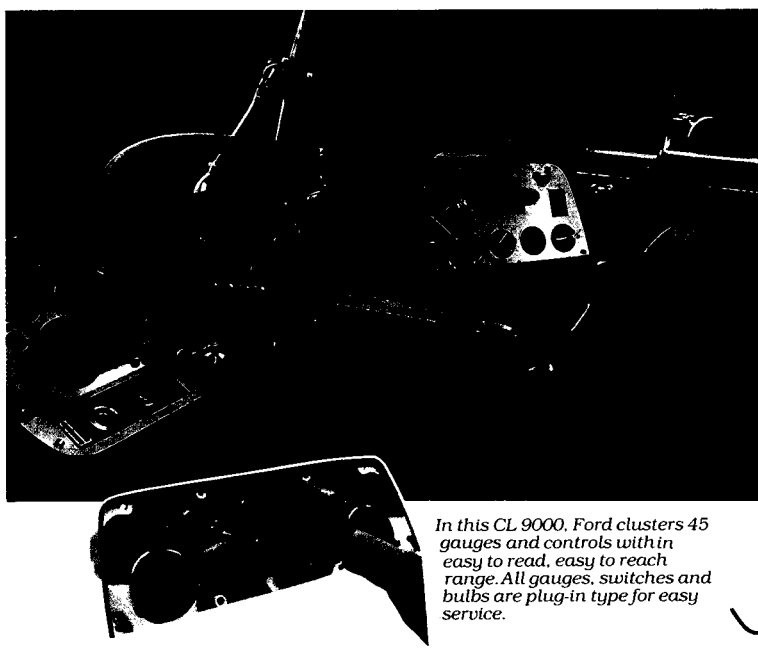

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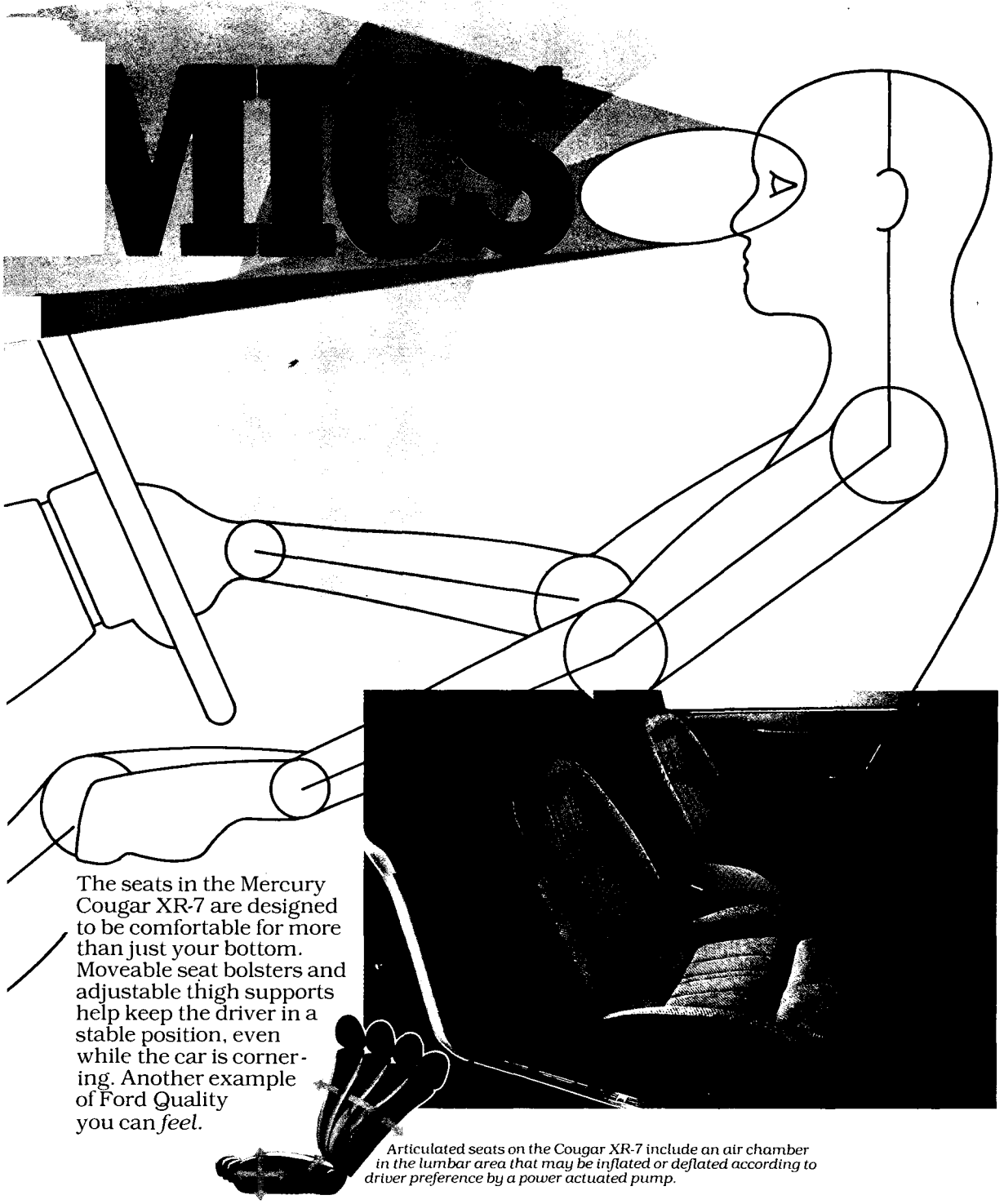


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nett's team denies that. "Tom basically went in and saved the union's bacon," says his assistant, Ronald Tarwater.

In any event, as Michaels says, "I began to believe that Kiley was sincere, even though we have a different philosophy." The real breakthrough came when negotiations shifted from union representation to work rules—particularly the so-called "pick-and-bid" system. Under pick-and-bid, MTA management nominally had the power, as in any other workplace, to assign jobs. But in practice, the supervisors picked their own. If a foreman wanted to work at a site near his house, higher-ups had no power to transfer him across town to where he was more needed. If they did, he could file a grievance, and the MTA would probably lose.

The union's willingness to abolish pick-and-bid paved the way for the rest of the agreement, which was signed in secret this past January. The MTA knew that its strongest card was the financial weakness of the SSSA, which was losing scores of members willing to take the risk of becoming higher-paid, faster-track, but "unprotected," superintendents. In exchange for allowing 500 to 800 more supervisors to leave the union, the SSSA received an increase in the MTA's annual contribution to the union's health and welfare fund and a promise to pay union dues if membership fell too low. This assured the future of the union, but in a much smaller and less powerful form. About 1,800 of the TA's 5,300 supervisors will soon be directly accountable to management, with more to come in the next few years.

"I'll go to my retirement deeply convinced that unionized management is an anachronism," says Kiley. "But we got the right to make assignments based on performance, and that is extremely important." It might also have paved the way for progress on other work rules in contract talks with the TWU, the huge hourly workers union. But Cuomo struck again. After the old contract expired March 31, he supported and signed legislation—over Kiley's public objections—that imposed arbitration. It will be more difficult to eliminate practices such as kerosene lamp wick-snipping in the slogging arbitration process.

## The Coney Island treatment

The fact that TA brass will soon be able to hire, fire, and promote 1,800 managers instead of 300 isn't going to transform the subways overnight. In fact, as the $8 billion rebuilding program gets underway, there will be even more delays and inconveniences. But the management reforms do provide some light at the end of the tunnel. At Coney Island, instead of one manager who reports to management, there are now 26—one for each shop. If they don't meet their production goals, they may not be around next year to try again.

The changes also mean that Kiley and Gunn can proceed to outline system-wide goals on which *they* will be judged. The initial objectives are modest—eliminate graffiti on a third of all trains by the end of the year, install 50 new fire-extinguishers—but these and dozens of others mark a start in the process of reversing the downward momentum of the system.

It will be a couple of years before the verdict is in on these civil service reforms. It might even turn out that the changes didn't go far enough. But the beauty of the New York subway system as an example of the need for civil service reform is that it illustrates how thoroughly confused our notions of merit have become. Merit isn't choosing answer (e), it's making sure the car gets swept.

In the federal government, where the civil service reigns, the message hasn't gotten through. Washington makes the MTA look like Tammany Hall. The group of 300 "noncompetitive" managers that Kiley and Gunn found so intolerably small would be shockingly large for many federal agencies. Perhaps the answer to making government work better—at all levels—is to show what happens when performance becomes the standard. Wait a couple of years, then begin a required package tour—Washington to Coney Island. ■

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# MEMO OF THE MONTH

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

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| DONALD F. BAKER, | § | |
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| Plaintiff-Appellee | § | |
| | § | |
| VS. | § | |
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| HENRY WADE, District Attorney of Dallas County, Texas, Etc., ET AL., | § | NO. 82-1590 |
| | § | |
| Defendants | § | |
| | § | |
| DANNY E. HILL, 47th District Attorney, | § | |
| | § | |
| Defendant-Appellant | § | |

APPELLEE'S RESPONSE TO APPELLANT'S REPLY TO APPELLEE'S REPLY TO APPELLANT'S BRIEF IN RESPONSE TO APPELLEE'S MOTION TO STRIKE APPENDICES TO BRIEF FOR APPELLANT

**Introduction**

Appellee initially filed a Motion to Strike Appendices to Brief for Appellant on July 22, 1983. Appellant filed a brief in response, which appellee replied to. Appellant has subsequently filed another brief on this motion, Appellant's Reply to Appellee's Reply to Appellant's Brief in Response to Appellee's Motion to Strike Appendices to Brief for Appellant (appellant's most recent brief), to which the appellee herein responds.

**Diversionary Issues**

Appellant complains bitterly and at length that he timely sent appellee a copy of his Brief in Response to Appellee's

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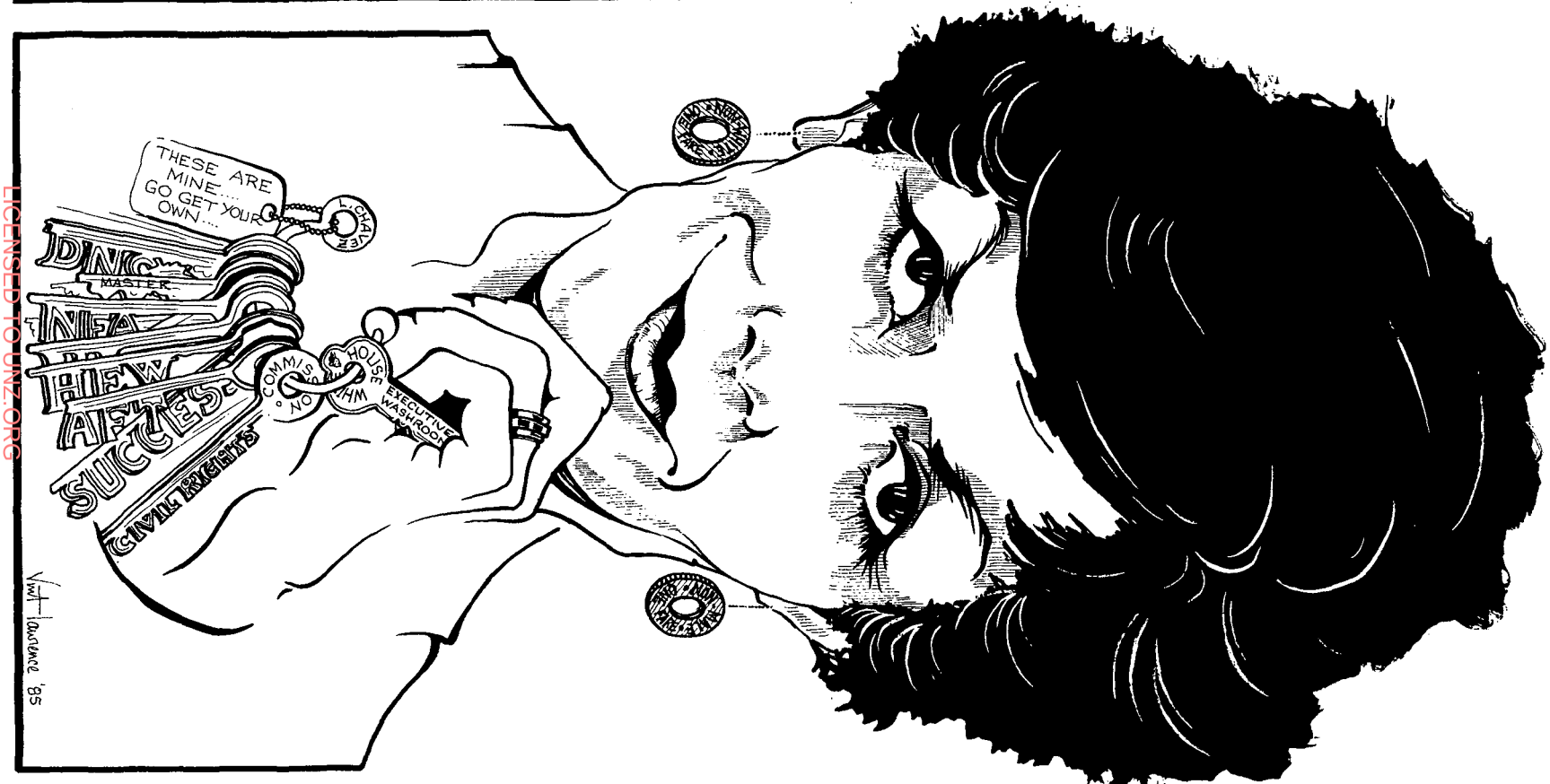
# JUST ONE OF THE GUYS

BY PAUL M. BARRETT

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# Linda Chavez and the Exploitation of Ethnic Identity

It was a scene from everyone's Washington fantasy: bright lights, reporters, the announcement that you've just become a Very Big Shot. Linda Chavez proudly recalls walking into the press conference with the three new appointees to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. President Reagan had chosen her to be staff director of the agency, and now the whole country was going to hear about it.

Chavez remembers sitting down in the middle of the row of chairs designated for the new officials. Almost immediately, a prominent network correspondent approached and asked her to move to the end, out of the television cameras' range. She moved, Chavez says, "but it was clear in my mind that their view was that I was put there because I was an Hispanic woman and was going to add a little color to the picture. They. . .didn't want the White House to get away with that. I found it very offensive."

When Linda Chavez, now 37, was appointed to the Civil Rights Commission post in August 1983, she was an obscure staff member from the American Federation of Teachers, a Democrat with liberal ties who had somehow found her way into the Reagan camp. Today, as White House director of public liaison, she is the most visible Hispanic-surnamed person in the administration and its highest-ranking woman. No reporter would dare ask her to move out of the picture anymore.

But Chavez's bitter memory of a spoiled debut—indeed, her whole career in Washington—provides a window through which to see the political exploitation of ethnic identity practiced by both the left and right. Chavez has worked for a string of Democratic officials who now express surprise and chagrin over what they see as her defection to the conservative camp. Some accuse her of unprincipled careerism, even hypocrisy. But Chavez responds that most of her old bosses never bothered to ask what she really thought about politics. Being bright, bronze-skinned, and a woman was all they required. This patronizing attitude, says Chavez, only confirmed her lifelong abhorrence of being reduced to a minority group category.

The Reagan administration has given Chavez a chance to get a lot of resentment off of her chest. At the Civil Rights Commission, she engineered an assault on liberal programs that rely on racial preferences to redress discrimination. In her new White House post, Chavez can be expected to continue that fight, in addition to preaching the Reagan hard line on issues such as Central America. Chavez, who recently switched her registration to the GOP, says she feels comfortable among her new patrons, appreciated as an individual. "I'm in the right place," she explains.

What she doesn't realize—or, more likely, won't admit—is that the rude reporter was correct: she's still in demand as a political symbol. The right has found some new minority woman talent, and her name just happens to be Linda Chavez.

## Dems with no clue

Chavez's pre-Reagan resume gives the impression of a standard climb up the liberal career ladder. She got her first Washington job in 1972 at the Democratic National Committee, helping devise strategies to counteract Richard Nixon's wooing of Hispanic voters. Chavez next worked on civil rights issues for Rep. Don Edwards, a perennial leader in the ADA and ACLU approval ratings. In 1974 she moved to the National Education Association, a notoriously liberal union, where she worked as a lobbyist. Chavez subsequently did similar legislative work for the NEA's rival, the American Federation of Teachers. After a brief stint in Jimmy Carter's Department of Health, Education and Welfare, she returned to the AFT, where in 1980 she wrote the union's campaign literature endorsing Senator Edward Kennedy over Carter in the Democratic primaries.

Many of Chavez's former associates portray her as a turncoat. "She never would have been considered if we knew she held these views against civil rights," says Richard Warden, who hired Chavez at HEW when he was assistant

*Paul M. Barrett is an editor of* The Washington Monthly.


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secretary for legislative affairs. William Blakey, who was Chavez's immediate supervisor in the department, says she willingly lobbied for federally funded bilingual education and government-mandated affirmative action—two programs Chavez has opposed since joining the Reagan administration. "I never had any hint of what I'm hearing now," says Blakey. "Was she lying then; was she just staying quiet? Does she mean it now? She seems to, but I can't figure it."

"I thought she was an Hispanic who was devoted to the general goals and ideals of the Hispanic community," says Don Edwards. "She's not. She has affiliated herself with the white male majority in America, and let the devil take the hindmost." Hispanic civil rights leaders accuse Chavez of having taken advantage of her ethnic background in politics while denouncing affirmative action for others. Arnold Torres, former executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, says that when he met Chavez while she was working for Edwards, "she spoke differently. . . .You couldn't really figure out what she thought because she never committed herself with us." Richard Fejardo, associate counsel of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, says, "She's getting into the Reagan administration as an Hispanic. She makes pronouncements as an Hispanic. But she doesn't want to be identified with the Hispanic community."

The degree of outrage over Chavez's emergence as a Republican says as much about the accusers as the accused. Whereas bigots see dark skin and assume inferiority, liberals tend to think that all minorities have politics very much like their own. Linda Chavez, in short, was being taken for granted.

Chavez is the first to admit that she's never had much use for the term "Hispanic." Although she was raised in Spanish-speaking communities in Albuquerque and Denver, Chavez is descended on her father's side from 17th-century Spanish colonists who settled in what is now New Mexico; her mother is Anglo. Other than language, most Spanish New Mexicans share little with recent Latin American immigrants to the Southwest. The Spanish descendants proudly maintain Iberian customs and holidays; they are extraordinarily patriotic and often politically conservative.

Chavez's parents were poor but instilled in their daughter a strong sense that individual achievement was the ticket to self-betterment. She joined the NAACP and CORE in high school and marched in front of a segregated Woolworth's in Denver. But Chavez says she always felt uncomfortable in civil rights circles. Though disadvantaged, she was never at war with "the system"; her ancestors, she points out, were Americans before the Anglos were.

From early childhood, Chavez says, she was "a staunch anticommunist." Like many Spanish New Mexicans, she is also a fan of the military. Without prompting, she describes a common emblem of pride among New Mexicans: the valiant suffering of the state's national guard unit in the World War II Bataan Death March, during which many Spanish-Americans lost their lives. "My father [an aerial gunner] was a war hero, shot down many times," says Chavez. "I grew up on war stories." She says she resented the sixties antiwar movement and favored American intervention in Vietnam.

Chavez emphasizes that she got into the University of Colorado "before the affirmative action movement." "I made it on hard work," she explains. "I made it on taking the classes, taking the hard subjects, studying hard, getting good grades." At Colorado, Chavez volunteered to tutor Mexican-American students, but she became disillusioned with the remedial program she founded when students pressured administrators into lowering minimum grade standards. "I fought that kind of thing even back then," she says, "because ultimately I thought it would hurt the kids." She also became a firm opponent of the use of racial quotas.

As a graduate student at UCLA, Chavez had an experience that she admits left deep scars. She intended to get a Ph.D. in English and Irish literature, but she received tremendous pressure, and a handsome salary offer, to lecture on Chicano writing. "Militants on campus," she says, demanded the course, despite her contention that there weren't enough Spanish-speaking writers in the United States to make up a syllabus. The class was a disaster: "The kids sort of expected that this was the course they could take to come and 'rap, ' in the jargon of the day. They *lived* Chicano literature; they didn't have to read books about it." Chavez says she was lenient but insisted that her students at least complete the reading list. They refused, and some walked out. She flunked a bunch of them.

In retaliation, the students visited a "reign of terror" on Chavez and her family, including vandalism, bomb threats, and electricity cutoffs. They broke into her car and defecated on the front seat. After that, Chavez says, she aban-



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doned her academic aspirations: "I didn't want to stay in teaching. I thought I would continue to be forced to teach those kinds of courses." Chavez left the lecture hall for Washington, where she joined her husband, Chris Gersten.

In 1972, Chavez says, she thought of herself as a loyal Democrat, in spite of her misgivings about certain liberal positions. She went to work for the DNC because she opposed Richard Nixon but left a few months after arriving, unable to serve the party that nominated the dovish George McGovern. (Chavez didn't vote at all in 1972 and sat out 1976 as well. In 1980 and 1984, she voted for Reagan.)

While working for Don Edwards, Chavez says, she made her feelings on quotas known to anyone who was curious and otherwise dealt with "narrow, specific issues," primarily in preparation for oversight hearings. "I did *not* draft legislation," she emphasizes.

Taking the NEA and HEW jobs, she now admits, was a mistake. As had happened in graduate school, Chavez says, she was perceived as an ethnic representative. "They were specifically looking for an Hispanic woman," she recalls of the NEA. "It was very clear to me they expected me to be the Hispanic lobbyist, to be their link to the Chicano caucus inside the NEA. I balked at that." She stayed for only a year at the NEA, six months at HEW.

At the AFT, Chavez says she felt somewhat more at home. Albert Shanker, president of the union, says Chavez told him of her opposition to quotas and her hawkish views on international affairs. Shanker also acknowledges that Chavez wrote the Kennedy literature only after criticizing the candidate's positions on the military. The AFT permitted her to publish a series of articles in a union magazine on teaching "traditional values" in public schools. The series attracted attention among conservatives and led to Chavez's selection for the civil rights job. Still, Shanker says he was "chagrined" to see his former staff member leading the Reaganizing of the Civil Rights Commission. "I guess I made certain [incorrect] assumptions about her basic politics," he says.

Several of Chavez's former bosses go further, conceding that she was hired for her skin color as much as her talents. William Blakey, for example, says that after Chavez left HEW, they had an argument about tokenism. According to Blakey, Chavez implied that he had his job primarily because he was black. Still angry about the comment, Blakey denies it with a string

**Whereas bigots see dark skin and assume inferiority, liberals tend to think that all minorities have politics very much like their own.**


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of expletives directed at Chavez. He also comments: "Why do you think *she* had the job? Some jobs in this town you get in part because of a racial identity."

That Chavez took ample advantage of liberal affirmative action in hiring seems beyond argument. She sought and accepted jobs with organizations she now says she disagreed with at the time. "I was in a different role then" as a staff member, Chavez argues. "You are not just responsible to your personal views." And in Chavez's case, those personal views shifted conveniently when the opportunity arose to jump from staff to political appointee. Chavez concedes, for instance, that she has lately discovered herself moving right on "economic and social issues." It's happening, in part, "from watching this administration," she explains. "I look around, and I see things sort of working and the country working and inflation having been brought down. . . . So I moved on those kinds of issues. . . relatively recently."

While she does not seem to have let political principle stand in the way of career advancement, Chavez still presents a good example of how liberals tend to overlook political and cultural distinctions among people crudely defined as minorities. Assuming that a Spanish New Mexican would hold stock "Hispanic" views, liberals ignore 300 years of history and the type of sharp class divisions that are common within many minority groups. Like the Spanish, conservative and financially secure Cubans are quick to distinguish themselves from other Hispanics, especially Puerto Ricans. Members of all of the Spanish-speaking groups, poor or wealthy, tend to look down on blacks.

Similar splits exist within black ranks here in Washington, where the world looks very different from the middle-class "gold coast" of upper 16th Street than it does from the heroin headquarters at 9th and T. "The mistake most white people make [is that] they think all black people are the same," says Jerry Washington, the street-talking host of a popular blues show on Washington radio. "[But] black people are just as different as white people."

This insight, in turn, suggests the shortcomings of any "rainbow coalition" electoral strategy. Being nonwhite is not a strong enough bond to hold many voters together. People aspire individually as well as collectively; a party must speak to them at both levels. As Chavez enjoys pointing out, exit polls from 1984 show that upwards of 40 percent of "Hispanics" voted for Reagan. And apart from electoral strategy, it is condescending to assume that people think or vote a particular way because of their ethnic or racial identity. Democrats will have to *earn* those votes. They cannot count on a congenital loyalty.

On the level of principle, the kind of affirmative action Chavez encountered among Democrats also contradicts the central thrust of the civil rights movement. That movement aimed to make people whole, regardless of skin color. It was an effort to break individuals out of stereotypes so they could enjoy autonomy and equal opportunity. Now, in an attempt to affirm their liberal credentials, some Democrats deny minority group members their individuality by ascribing to them political views a black or an Hispanic or an Asian is *supposed* to have.

## A knack for flexibility

Whatever resentment toward liberals Chavez may legitimately feel, however, cannot explain away her romance with the right. There is plenty of middle ground between knee-jerk endorsement of racial quotas and the search-and-destroy mission Chavez undertook at the Civil Rights Commission. As the agency's staff director, she helped raze what had been a nonpartisan watchdog agency and replace it with a new propaganda arm of the White House. There is a mean spirit in Chavez's approach to civil rights that casts a different light on her self-righteous denunciations of patronizing Democrats.

Until Chavez's arrival, the commission had goaded administrations—Democratic and Republican—to enforce civil rights laws more vigorously. In the 1970s, the agency endorsed government-sponsored affirmative action to remedy past discrimination. It also sacrificed a degree of its independence by increasingly accepting the agenda of established civil rights groups as its own.

Not surprisingly, President Reagan's initial efforts to roll back race-conscious remedies came in for severe criticism from the commission. "It seems to be devoting it's time to sniping at me with accusations and saying things that aren't true," Reagan complained early in his first term. He decided to do something about it. In an unprecedented move, the president attempted to sack all of the sitting commissioners. When that resulted in lawsuits and congressional opposition, he agreed to a compromise under which he ended up with a 6 to 2 majority and Chavez as staff director. By this past March, Reagan's tune had


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changed markedly. He told his chairman, Clarence Pendleton, "I don't disagree with anything you are doing."

Chavez drastically shifted the agency's research goals, reflecting her personal experience as well as White House policy. For example, she pushed the agency to explore the *negative* effects on higher education of affirmative action in hiring and admissions. In her own mind, Chavez already had a conclusion, as she noted in a 1984 memorandum to the commissioners: "A general decline in academic standards coincided with the advent of affirmative action in higher education." Among her other accomplishments, Chavez killed an ongoing study of the impact of Reagan federal aid cuts on minority college students. Instead, she launched research designed to challenge "the bases of some race- and sex-conscious affirmative action policies which operate on the assumption that racism and sexism are ingrained in American society." Again, Chavez already had an answer in mind: "People...don't believe America is a racist society," she told *The Washington Post* last year, "and I sure don't believe it is."

This is the kind of tunnel vision that Chavez likes to associate with liberals. It's one thing to be proud of having scrambled out of poverty and through tough times; it's another to deny cavalierly that racism exists and that it holds back other, less fortunate or less talented people. Even if Chavez could have succeeded without affirmative action, she benefited from it throughout her Washington career. Now she would refuse others the extra boost they might need to grab the bottom rung of the ladder. In contrast to Chavez's unfortunate university experiences, affirmative action *can* entail widened opportunity without lowered standards. In television news, as just one example, local stations put almost no blacks on the air through the mid-1960s. Today, many of the most talented correspondents and anchors are black.

Chavez's exploits at the Civil Rights Commission helped land her the White House public liaison job. She has not only the blessings of the administration but also those of the far right. "She's very shrewd, very able, and she's one of us," Paul Weyrich, president of the Coalition for America, recently told *The Washington Times*, which itself has spared no ink in praising Chavez. She has returned the compliments, portraying the administration as the promised land of merit. "If I believed they had put out a call for an Hispanic woman [for director of public liaison]," says Chavez, "I would not have answered the call."

She must not have been listening very closely. At the April press conference announcing Chavez's promotion to the White House, Donald Regan, Reagan's chief of staff, was asked by a reporter, "Is the fact that she's an Hispanic a factor in her selection?" Regan replied, "It didn't go unnoticed, yes." According to the transcript, there was laughter all around. A White House official familiar with the public liaison office says of the Chavez appointment: "It was an unspoken assumption that at least it would be a nonwhite nonmale."

Given Chavez's insight into the uses of foreign-sounding names and dark complexions, it's hard to believe that she's as naive as she claims about the Republicans' mimicking of liberal techniques. Chances are the White House staff title is worth enough to Chavez to look the other way. Still, it must be tough at times to be gloated over as the house "nonwhite nonmale." Paul Weyrich volunteers this relevant anecdote:

"I was telling [Senator] Paul Laxalt about Linda, that she's connected with the neoconservatives, connected with the new right, connected with the business community, married to a leader in the Jewish community, and she's Hispanic. Laxalt said, 'The next thing you'll tell me is that she's Basque!'" Weyrich says he and Laxalt, the Senate's sole Basque, shared a good chuckle over that one. ■


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# the Politics of Motherhood

*By Deborah Fallows*

Betty Friedan launched the contemporary women's movement in 1963 by depicting the home as a domestic penal institution for women. In *The Feminine Mystique* she wrote that housewives "baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. They changed the sheets on the beds twice a week instead of once, took the rug-hooking class in adult education. Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house; their only fight to get and keep their husbands."

Over the past 20 years, the women's movement has carefully proclaimed its intention to give women the "opportunity to choose" their own lives—as professionals, as wage earners, or as housewives. But in feminists' eyes, the real challenges lay outside the home—in the workplace. A career offered all the answers: Dependent on your spouse? Get an income, become self-sufficient. No power to back up your opinion? Money talks. Bored and lonely? Get out of the house and in with interesting people. Everyone taking you for granted? Find recognition with an official-sounding job.

One thing was missing from this strategy, however, and that was a concern for how it would affect the children. Leaders of the women's movement have never quite said that jobs should come before family. Those from the mainstream of the movement have taken care to point out that many of their guiding lights are young mothers. Still, their battles for political and economic equality have inevitably led them to prize achievement on the job above all else. Understanding as they might be of women who choose not to work, feminists tend to see such a choice as a step backwards for the cause. By questioning women's place in society, the women's movement threw motherhood into the political arena.

In the late 1970s, conservative forces coalesced to challenge feminism. The right offered women a clear, complete explanation of the wife's place at home. It is "good" to be there (it is traditional, Christian); the wife has a responsibility to be there (to husband and to children); she enjoys security in her position (her right to support by her husband); she should find all of her satisfaction there (from raising her children); it is important that she be there (to her family, she is irreplaceable).

While some leaders of the so-called "pro-family" forces concede that women may have to work for economic reasons, this doesn't shake the right's faith in an "ideal" division of labor and authority in the family. In the "ideal family"—a concept referred to routinely in pro-family literature—the husband is the breadwinner and

*Deborah Fallows is the mother of two sons. This article is adapted from her book,* A Mother's Work, *soon to be published by Houghton Mifflin.* *© 1985 by Deborah Fallows.*



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decisionmaker. Next to him is his wife, a helpmate but not an equal.

Neither the women's movement nor the pro-family movement offers an adequate, or even honest prescription for mothers. The right preaches complacence and subservience. It discourages women from seeking challenges in the world beyond the home, thereby reducing the spiritual resources that could enrich mothers' years with their children. Many conservatives have also succumbed to the familiar temptation of the comfortable to forget about or condemn those on whom fortune has not smiled.

The women's movement, with which I sympathize much more than I do with the right, defines success in terms of professional achievement, thereby implicitly downgrading the idea that parents should care for their children themselves. In coming to grips with the realities of motherhood, women will have to see through the symbolism and rhetoric of both sides of this debate.

## *Right-wing sweetheart*

Phyllis Schlafly, leader of the anti-ERA movement and founder of the conservative Eagle Forum, reigns as first lady of the pro-family movement. What Schlafly would have for all other women is her version of a perfect life—that is, a life much like her own.

From what I'd read about Schlafly in *Ms.* magazine and elsewhere, I expected her to be a harpy, or at least an excessively brisk woman. Instead, she is attractive and professional-looking—calm as an executive, warm as my best friend's mother. She ushered me into her Capitol Hill office, like a hostess having me in for coffee. "Hello, Debbie. Sorry to keep you waiting. Tell me about your book. Have you got a copy of *Sweetheart*?"

I have read her biography, *Sweetheart of the Silent Majority*, and many issues of her monthly newsletter, the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, although neither publication is easy to locate. The proprietor of one women's bookstore I called told me she didn't know whether Schlafly had written anything, adding, "and we certainly wouldn't carry it if she did."

From talking with her, I soon knew many things about Schlafly's personal life: for example, she worked her way through college toiling in a munitions factory and taught her six children to read. She wrote and published her own numerous books, lives in financial security with her wealthy husband, and has waged several unsuccessful campaigns to hold political office. Her husband is much older than she is, and she employed a governess for her children for at least one summer.

In between the lines of her conversation lurk the prerequisites to the "perfect" life she has led: education, money, a healthy family, and a supportive husband.

But life doesn't work for most women the way Schlafly thinks it should. Half the women getting married today can expect to be divorced; by 1990, one child out of four under ten years old—almost nine million children—will have lived with a single parent at some point in his life. Over one-fourth of the women who are legally entitled to child support payments do not receive them. In hard economic times, husbands will lose jobs, and women can still expect to earn about 60 percent of what men earn. We know these things to be facts. And we can pretty well guess that during the days when divorce was rare and when women kept their own counsel, similar discontent and trouble existed—only secretly.

But Schlafly ignores statistics like these, and turns a judgmental ear to the stories of troubled women. She complacently advises wives to stay home, resting assured that "since God ordained that women have babies, our laws properly and realistically establish that men must provide financial support for their wives and children."

Connaught Marshner, director of the Family Policy Division of the Free Congress and Education Foundation, is a generation younger than Schlafly but, like her, a mother and a major power in the conservative movement. Marshner, like many conservative young women raising families, speaks with more realism than Schlafly does.

Marshner is an attractive, kind-looking woman in her mid-thirties, with dark, shoulder-length hair pinned back from her face. She has a company phone in her car so she can conduct business on her long commutes from Washington to Virginia, where she lives with her husband, who is a college professor, and her two elementary school-age sons. On her desk sits a photo of one of her sons bathing her infant daughter, who, she tells me at a difficult moment in our talk, has died from heart disease. Unlike Schlafly, Marshner has seen life's rougher side.

Like Schlafly, however, Marshner lives something of a contradiction. She agrees with the right's version of the "ideal" family, in which the mother stays home with the children. But, she


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says, "ideal" comes with two large qualifications: *if* a family can afford for the mother to stay home, and *if* she can be fulfilled at home. For Marshner and many younger conservative women, the fact of working mothers is just that—a fact. It is not a goal or an opportunity or a promising development. According to Marshner, women work because they are called upon to work, either for economic reasons or for community needs. Women, being "other-oriented" by nature, as Marshner describes them, are responding to a call from others to work, rather than to inner drives.

A mother who works or who is divorced or single, according to Marshner, can still raise a "traditional" family. The idea of "tradition" rests much less on the structure of the family or the detailed division of family labor than on a sense of mission about moral standards. The family must live by "a system of moral norms which, once well-defined, are taken to be without exception."

In some general sense, it's hard to quibble with Marshner's morality. It sounds like an effort to raise honest, generous children—something all of us, conservative or liberal, strive to do. But Marshner's definitions of "traditional" morality are more specific than this and include prominently her staunch belief that, when push may come to shove, the father is the figure of authority in the family. "The husband is the head of the household," she says. "He *should* have responsibility for making final decisions. That *should* be the case."

Somewhere between Schlafly and Marshner the conservative pendulum rests. Much of the right still ignores the basic truth about women at home: that they are in a state of financial dependency. This is not necessarily evil—it is the situation in my household, by my husband's and my own choice—but it requires something more than Schlafly's pacifying assertions that little ladies should not trouble their pretty heads with thoughts about money.

Every woman needs to make sure she can take care of herself, and the children, if circumstances should change—and to this need the conservatives seem blind. Women owe it to themselves and their children to make financial provisions for such unforeseen but common occurrences as divorce or illness or death. Women should also at least be thinking of contingency plans for intolerable situations at home, such as infidelity or physical abuse.

*Conservatives may love their kids, but their view of children is remote, studied, and at odds with the reality of daily life.*

For their self-protection, women need some form of insurance. It may be education, which would equip them to earn a living, even if they prefer not to while the children are young; it may be extra money, from an insurance policy or pension; it may also be a network of extended family or friends, who can help absorb the shock.

This need not imply what Schlafly suggests—that women who make such preparations are spurning their families. She characterizes the provoking call of the feminists as: "Come, leave your home, husband, and children and join all those unhappy females in a new sisterhood of togetherness." But wise precautions do not imply any less love, trust, or confidence in a marriage or family situation. Behind every statistic of divorce, widowhood, or poverty, is the story of a woman whose life did not turn out the way she planned.

The right ignores not only these provisions for the unexpected but also plans for the inevitable. The responsibility of caring for children, consuming as it may be, has limits even while it is going on—and someday it will be over. What are women to do then?



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Schlafly implies that such concerns stem from women with attitude problems— "whether you wake up in the morning with a chip on your shoulder or whether you have a positive mental attitude." Once you stop moping around the house and letting yourself get big ideas about meeting challenges in the outside world, then your troubles will disappear. "If you think diapers and dishes are a never-ending repetitive routine," says Schlafly, "just remember that most of the jobs outside the home are just as repetitious, tiresome, and boring." She writes that "if you complain about servitude to a husband, servitude to a boss will be more intolerable. Everyone in the world has a boss of some kind. It is easier for most women to achieve a harmonious working relationship with a husband than with a foreman, supervisor, or office manager."

Rita Kramer, author of *In Defense of the Family*, suggests that some feminists "attempt to substitute one form of tyranny [childrearing] with another [working at a job]." She argues that a mother's "natural desire to be with her baby may give way to the social pressure to 'be somebody' in a society that is increasingly telling women that what counts is achievement, however trivial, outside the home, just so it is outside the home and apart from childrearing."

Social pressures certainly do play a large part in many women's decisions to work, but Kramer underestimates the depth of feeling and the scope of the ambivalence that many women have about their desire to broaden themselves beyond motherhood.

With no grasp of how tearing an issue this is for many women, the right blithely offers an array of milquetoast alternatives for ways of keeping yourself busy outside the home. Schlafly proposes that women try volunteer work: "welfare, hospital, educational, cultural, civic, and political. All these avenues provide opportunities for women to perform useful services to the community—and in so doing to become happier, more interesting, and more fulfilled."

Volunteerism certainly meets a basic human need. It can be deeply satisfying to help others when they cannot help themselves. Attending community service club meetings, participating in museum benefits, doing library work—all have their place. The shortcoming of the conservatives is not their recognition of the merits of volunteerism; it is their simplistic notion that it can and should be enough for all women. Not everyone can find a life of fulfillment in volunteer


# A New Road for America: The Neoliberal Movement

*edited by*
*Charles Peters and*
*Phillip Keisling*

**Developed from a 1983 conference sponsored by *The Washington Monthly*, this new work offers a broad-based manifesto for the neoliberal movement, including contributions from Bruce Babbitt, James David Barber, James Fallows, Michael Kinsley, Victor Navasky, Irving Kristol, Andrew Cockburn, Ken Auletta, Daniel Yankelovich, Hendrick Hertzberg, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, and others. Charles Peters, the "godfather" of the neoliberal movement, is editor of *The Washington Monthly*. Phillip Keisling is a former editor of *The Washington Monthly*. Paper, 250 pages. $7.95 + $1.00 postage & handling.**

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work, just as not everyone can find fulfillment in a boardroom, a courtroom, a university, or at home.

To hear the right's hymns of praise to the family, one might guess that the welfare of children is the first and last item on their list of concerns. The reason that mothers and fathers must take their assigned places in the family hierarchy is that the children will thereby benefit.

But the details of the right's position—for example, pro-family opposition to day care (see sidebar, p.45)—reveal a seeming lack of interest in children and their needs. The right presents an abstract, peculiar sense of what children are like. I can't claim that conservatives don't love their children as much as anyone else does. But their view of children is remote, studied, and at odds with the realities of daily life.

Once again, Phyllis Schlafly is a remarkable example. As she tells it, she was able to write books while her children played contentedly at her feet. "I was able to compose and write with children right around me," she explains, adding, "My husband can't do that."

Having spent the last three years in such an effort myself, with my children ranging from as young as one year old to as old as seven during that time, I know the difficulties of writing with children around. I can do it only when my children are away—taking naps, at school, at friends' houses. Surely Schlafly has forgotten: could her children really have colored or built with blocks around her feet for sustained periods without interrupting with questions, requests for glasses of water, trips to the bathroom, or fights? Perhaps she closed her study door and the children knew not to enter. Some mothers boast that this is their secret to working at home and "caring" for their children at the same time. The technique might work for a ten-year-old, but it certainly won't—and shouldn't—for a child of three.

Schlafly's reminiscences of children greatly resemble those of Marabel Morgan's. In her book, *The Total Woman,* Morgan recommends, among other things, that women lift the spirits of their tired breadwinners by greeting hubby at the front door clad only in saran wrap. She counsels mothers to "draw out the venom inside a person" as a tactic for dealing with a recalcitrant child. "When a close friend spanked his three-year-old for hitting the baby, he did it in a loving way," Morgan writes. "Afterward the child hugged him and said, 'Thank you for saying no, Daddy!' "

As any parent knows, this scene is make-believe. Bearing and raising a child is far more complex and far less programmable than Morgan or Schlafly would have us think. Moreover, there isn't much room for bad luck in the pro-family world. What if a child is born ill or impaired in some way? Does it mean you have failed if you have nothing to show off to your friends and neighbors? What if you raise a plumber or a short-order cook instead of a lawyer or a business executive? What if you raise a liberal instead of a conservative? Just as you can't control the sex of your child, the skills she is born with, or the beauty he inherits, you can affect but not determine your child's future, his personality, her "success." You can do your best while raising your child, but you can't claim or bear complete responsibility for the life your child leads.

Yet this is the burden Schlafly seems to put on mothers who spend all their energy raising children. She implies that a perfect life with a perfect mother will automatically produce a perfect child. "A mother can see the results of her own handiwork in the good citizen she has produced and trained," Schlafly writes. She congratulates mothers on successes they aren't responsible for—and implicitly charges them with failures they can't control.

## Ms.-*ing the point*

While conservatives have in recent years reasserted a vision of the ideal homemaker, the women's movement has continued to look with a suspicious eye at women who stay at home. Feminist leaders are quick to deny this accusation, arguing that the press is to blame for unfairly depicting their position as being hostile to homemakers.

"Infuriating," says Letty Cottin Pogrebin, a founder and editor of *Ms.* magazine. "It's not a club with membership cards on behalf of women's interests," Pogrebin tells me one afternoon in the New York offices of *Ms.* Liberal women's groups include strong contingents of women at home; many of their leaders are mothers themselves. Feminists have pushed for legislative reform that directly assists homemakers. "Her issues are our issues," says Pogrebin, citing child care, healthcare, drug addiction, divorce reform, domestic violence, displaced homemakers, and comparable worth.

To its credit, the women's movement has made great progress for women in general, including mothers at home. To understand Pogrebin's pride in these accomplishments, it helps to examine


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# Who'll Mind the Children?

In the political battle over motherhood, day care is a central point of contention, but one largely obscured by the passion of ideology. In feminists' eyes, day care is indispensable to the formula for women's equality. Conservatives see it as a threat to the foundation of the family.

The debate focuses on day care—meaning the organized care for large groups of children—more often than other forms of child care, in part because large centers are where government is involved and where innovations and regulations can most easily be applied. Large facilities are also the most economical and efficient way for caring for children.

Often the area of disagreement extends even to what "day care" is. Some people who "don't believe in day care" really mean that they wouldn't consign their children to large, impersonal facilities, yet they happily send them to family homes or nursery schools. Meanwhile, some people who say that "day care is fine for children" are thinking about several hours a day in a family home.

The most familiar conservative criticism of day care is that it amounts to a near-totalitarian separation of child from parent and should in no way be encouraged. For example, when the House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families recently recommended more federal support of day care, four Republican committee members dissented, arguing that government-sponsored day care is unacceptable as a matter of first principles. "Let's look for a moment at the real subject of our discussion—children," the congressmen said. "When we talk about the comparative costs of care for infants, toddlers, and pre-school children, we ought never to forget that we are talking about children who will be taken from their mothers and cared for primarily by strangers from the first months of their lives." Of primary concern, they added, is the question, "how does day care affect our children?" This is certainly a good question, but it will not be answered with confidence anytime soon. In the meantime, 2 million children are in day care centers, and 6.5 million under the age of 13 go without any supervision at home.

Often, conservative opponents of day care say they recognize that some mothers have to work and even sound broad-minded about it. The Rev. Jerry Falwell has said, "My pastoral advice is, if the wife must work, the husband should make the extra effort to compensate in any way possible for her absence . . . . The husband is as much responsible for rearing the children as the wife."

Yet the logical progression seems to come to a halt at this point. If Falwell really believed that mothers must sometimes work, would it not follow that someone else must look after their children? If day care is therefore necessary, shouldn't the right join in supporting improvements in the institutions where these children will spend so many hours? Apparently not, if that means further expansion of federal power. Rochelle Beck of the Children's Defense Fund points out that Falwell's Moral Majority is part of the network of "'pro-family' interest groups [whose] . . . effective lobbying and fundraising efforts go to oppose federal funds for child-care services."

The conservative spokesmen do not explicitly block improvements in day care, but they oppose all the steps—especially further regulation and subsidy—that would make improvement possible. They support the kind of laissez-faire child care system we have today, whereby some combination of luck or money is the only answer to finding good care.

For example, Paul Weyrich, president of the far right Coalition for America, has said: "If a mother has to work, she should see to it her children are cared for by another family or by other family members. It is detrimental when so many kids are left in day care operations with strangers. . . . A child learns to hide the things he's worried about from some day care attendant."


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Does Weyrich know what it is like to "try to see to it" that a friend or relative can handle all the day care? He is right about the drawbacks of large day-care centers but is content to push the problem away, since this fits conveniently with his overall political views.

Phyllis Schlafly, leader of the anti-ERA movement, touched on day care in her 1977 book, *The Power of the Positive Woman*. Her arguments still stand as a fair reflection of the "pro-family" attitude: "The energies and dedication of the Positive Woman are needed as never before to fend off the attacks on the moral, the social and economic integrity of the family. Take, for example, the tremendous drive to set up child-care centers—taxpayer-financed, government-managed, 'universally' available for 'all socioeconomic groups' regardless of means. This adds up to an attempt to make it public policy to remove babies from the family unit and place them in an institutional environment."

Obviously the government should not "substitute" for parents; but there are certain families in which parents cannot or will not care adequately for their children. To what extent will those parents' sins be visited upon their children? By defining those parents as morally unworthy—which in some cases they may be—the conservatives have successfully excluded the innocent *children* of those families from the universe of those deserving public help. This leads easily to a dismissal of subsidized day care as a national need.

As is so often the case in political life, the inflexibilities and excesses of one extreme are fully matched by the other. Leaders of the women's movement, who have done so much to remove barriers to women's occupational success, naturally view day care in a special light. Unless children can be left safely and happily in someone else's care, how will women continue to advance in the workplace?

The feminists don't delude themselves with dreams about fathers quitting work to tend the children while their wives move up. Day care has to be the answer.

According to the women's movement, the only people who object to day care are those who feel threatened by the idea of women succeeding in the workplace. Feminists may be willing to entertain private comments about the defects of certain facilities or certain approaches, as long as everyone understands that they all believe in day care as an institution. But when criticism is conducted in public, where the gains made by the women's movement still seem so fragile, it's inevitably seen as a hostile act. For feminists it is but a short step from criticizing day care to suggesting that there are fundamental conflicts between parenthood and career.

Bettye Caldwell, president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, reflects this doctrinaire attitude, denouncing even the most troubling reports about day care. No doubt Caldwell, who represents those who work in centers, is sincerely concerned about the conditions that make large group day care difficult for many children. But she reserves her public fury for something else—the *reports* about bad conditions, which she says give day care a bad name.

Caldwell was particularly outraged by a 1983 article by Dominique Browning published in *Texas Monthly* magazine. Browning described day-care centers in and around Houston:

"Workers are paid the minimum wage, and many of them take a job in a center only long enough to make money for a special purpose; then they quit. . . . All day long, 11 to 15 babies from about eight weeks to 12 months old lie in their cribs or sit in their pens and scream for attention, stare at the ceiling, gurgle quietly, or sleep. . . .The sitters cannot play with any child for very long because, as one of them explained, the child would get used to the attention and scream whenever he didn't get it."

In her remarks to the 1983 Junior League Parenting Conference in Washington, D.C., Caldwell said that in all her travels, she had never seen any day-care center like that. Caldwell has written that "the media need to highlight more of the positive aspects of quality child care if the public interest is to be served."

Bettye Caldwell may never have seen day-care centers like those Browning described, but I have, and I did not have to look very hard. Liberals in general have found it hard to confess the limitations of their social programs, even though such warts and imperfections are inevitable in even the best-run organizations. For this reluctance they have paid a steep political price. There is a lot of very bad day care out there, and the institution of outside-the-home child care must be strong enough to withstand scrutiny or it will not improve and flourish.

—*D. E.*



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some specific examples.

In insurance and pensions, women's groups have worked to reform rates, terms, and conditions that discriminate on the basis of gender. For instance, women often pay more than men for the same health insurance coverage. Pregnancy and childbirth are often excluded from coverage or qualify only for very inadequate coverage. Women who take time off to raise children don't fit the rules and provisions of retirement systems.

mothers are trying to drown them in guilt. They perceive homemakers sneering at them for being irresponsible toward home and family. On the other hand, nonworking mothers assume that working mothers look down on them, making them feel like weak sisters who just can't keep up. The withering comments are familiar to every at-home mother: "What's an educated young woman like you doing at home?" Or: "I'd go out of my mind if I stayed at home all day."

*The tensions between the women's movement and nonworking mothers stems from politics, but the hostility is deeply personal.*

In the area of Social Security, feminist groups such as the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) advocate improving the fairness and adequacy of provisions for *all* women. In 1982, WEAL points out, the average man received $430 per month in benefits; the average woman, $308. Retired female workers averaged $335 per month compared to $438 for retired male workers. These inequities arise, the feminists say, from historically low wages for working women and an undervalued estimation of homemakers' contributions to a family's income. To correct the situation, WEAL has supported a system of "earnings sharing." Under earnings sharing, a husband and wife would, for Social Security purposes, each be credited with half the family's total earnings during the marriage, whether both of them were working or not, plus individual earnings gained before or after the marriage. Later, each would receive pensions based on his or her own personal account. For the homemaker, earnings sharing could also provide disability benefits and survivor protection through the Social Security system, even though she may never have worked for pay.

But none of this addresses the question of spirit and tone. The deepest tensions between the women's movement and nonworking mothers are based on the attitudes the mothers perceive in the movement. Although its origin is in politics, the hostility is also personal.

Working mothers often feel that nonworking

There is, of course, no inherent incompatibility between women reaching out for equality and women staying at home. But, as any woman under the age of 40 knows, there is an imposed incompatibility. The women's movement has not yet had the time or made the effort to understand and explore what life at home can be like for women today. Feminists may officially say that "choice" is at the top of their agenda for women, but there are too many hints suggesting that this talk comes fairly cheap. Throughout my years at home and well before that, I have gotten the message from the feminists that there is only one "right" choice that a progressive woman and young mother can make. Why did I feel that? Because of signals like these:

- Gloria Steinem is promoting her latest book, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* on a radio talk show in mid-1984. During a phone-in session, a caller asks, "What do you *really* think of women who stay home?" The host of the show, a droll, forthright character named Joel E. Spivak, points out that on every show with a prominent feminist, at least one caller asks some version of this question. Steinem's answer, of course, is that the feminist movement created the choice for women to lead their lives as they want to. She even says that staying home is just as valid and reputable a choice as working. And yet, only minutes earlier, perhaps forgetting that housewives are listening, she has referred to the


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"narrow and stifled" lives of women at home.

• I am speaking with a spokeswoman for the National Women's Political Caucus about Social Security and insurance as well as about my children and my book. On the way out, she asks me, in a sister-to-sister tone, "Well, when *are* you going to go back to work?"

• A full-time mother writes to *Ms.*, complaining, "I get the feeling you look down on me, condescend to me because I'm not working." *Ms.* replies with a straight face, "We were surprised to hear this. We have tried to present topics of interest to women at home—childbirth, pregnancy, housework, daily lives, etc. We all have children ourselves and know what it's been like to face the decisions."

To prove its bona fides, *Ms.* sends writer Jane Lazarre to spend a morning with Jane Broderick, author of the challenging letter. Lazarre describes a meeting at the crossroads of feminism that takes place in a Long Island kitchen. A full-time mother of eight, Broderick lays out her positions on feminist issues: birth control, child-rearing, housework. Lazarre professes a closeness to Broderick, but the closest the writer comes to finding a key to Broderick's spirit is to focus on two things: her strong Catholicism, which has a lot to do with becoming a mother of eight children but very little to do with feminism, and Broderick's explanation that she sometimes finds it necessary "to hide. And I do just that. I really have to sit very still. Just be alone with myself. And become whole again."

All mothers can recognize that sitting very still is Broderick's gimmick for maintaining sanity. But they also understand that it reveals little about her method of sustaining herself as a mother to eight children. Lazarre, and *Ms.*, are content with the superficial view and do not search for any real insights into full-time motherhood.

To be fair, an occasional insight slips into the feminist literature. For example, in a diary of a day with her small children, published in *Ms.*, Phyllis Rosser describes motherhood minute-by-minute:

"9:50. Stopped to feed the cat because she was making so much noise."

"10:28. Sat down again. Sam asked me to watch her turn somersaults."

"5:10. Took Sam to the toy store to buy birthday present for Tim while the boys stayed home with Bill."

Her days are not that interesting to read about, but the insights she gleans from examining her own diary are. They offer an important message to full-time mothers of small children:

"I was beginning to understand why raising children was so much harder than working in an office. I was allowing my children to dominate my life with trivia, and that left no time to do the things I wanted to do with them, like painting and hiking. It also kept me from having any blocks of time for projects of my own."

Betty Friedan has come closest to taking the scorn out of the word "housewife," much of which she introduced in the first place with *The Feminine Mystique.* In her sequel, *The Second Stage,* Friedan writes:

"We must at least admit and begin openly to discuss feminist denial of the importance of family, of women's own need to give and get love. . . . It would seem to me that in the second stage we should move for some very simple aids that make it possible for mothers (or fathers) who want to stay home and take care of their own children to do so, with some economic compensation that might make the difference."

*One of the reasons to push ahead with the feminist campaign for fairer pay is that it would permit fathers to take a few years off to care for the children.*



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The women's movement has addressed many issues of concern to women at home. But the heart of the matter—how women can lead rich and independent lives at home—is left hanging. Feminists offer women in the workplace a great sense of having asked the difficult questions about life: whether to work, what to expect on the job, what professional goals to set. The women's movement has not done the same for women at home. Feminists have not asked the questions that matter: Why stay at home? How can I find satisfaction there? How does life at home fit with important things in my family's life or the fabric of a larger community?

## *Diapering is man's work*

What, then, am I recommending? For people who are troubled by the blind spots and omissions in the standard political formulas, is there a better alternative? I think there is. It is possible at least to outline a political approach to children and parenthood that would emphasize the things that make a difference in children's lives.

The first principle is that parents should strive to care for their children themselves. It will not always be possible, and many children will get along fine in any case. Still, other conditions being equal, children are more likely to thrive when they spend most of their day with a parent rather than a hired caretaker. One of our political goals, therefore, should be to create the circumstances that allow more parents to care for their young children themselves.

Simply stating that as a goal would be important in itself. "Parenthood" is supposed to be one of our bedrock societal values, but it really isn't. I have heard many more speeches about inflation, taxes, the deficit, nuclear war, and the Sandinistas than about parenthood. Recognizing the potential political power of a rational approach to parenthood could lead to many practical steps: for example, encouraging businesses to change their policies on maternity leave, paternity leave, part-time work, and job-sharing.

The second principle is an insistence that the balance between parenthood and career be worked out by both parents. In part this is a practical economic problem. Because most women earn less money than most men, when it comes time to decide which spouse stays home, the choice is obvious. How can the family afford to lose its main breadwinner? One of the reasons to push ahead with the feminist campaign for fairer pay is that it would make it more feasible for fathers to take a few years off to care for the children.

Unfortunately, this issue transcends economics. Too many men view the parenthood/career balance as their wives' problem, of no concern to them. For the sake of the children, and the mothers, *and* the fathers, we need to remind men, day after day until it takes, that it is their concern, too. They are as responsible as their wives for finding a way to reconcile their professional ambitions with the welfare of their children.

Third, we must recognize that if spouses—for the time being, mainly mothers—are to stay out of the work force for a while, they need certain practical protections. Here, many of the steps toward reform already have been proposed by the feminists. Pension reform and enforcement of child-support orders will allow parents to care for their children without becoming too vulnerable to fate.

Fourth, we must have day care—more of it, and more of high quality. Day care has become a permanent feature of American life. Millions of children will spend billions of hours in these institutions. Those hours can be relatively productive, or they can be actively damaging, depending on how the day care centers are run. If we are serious about improving day care, we must raise the regulatory standards imposed on the centers and put more money into their operation. Increased federal spending is unlikely at a time when government programs of all kinds are being cut back. But if the care of our children is important, we should find ways to improve day care that do not add to the federal deficit—perhaps by enlisting businesses to subsidize day care, or by using our talents more creatively in volunteer efforts.

Finally, we should insist on a principle missing from all the political manifestos about women and families I have seen. Women who stay home with their children should feel just as great an obligation to use their intellect and energy wisely as any young doctor or teacher of either sex. The women's movement and the pro-family forces seem to agree that a woman who ends up at home with the children ("by choice" according to the feminists, "by natural order" according to the right) has stepped off of life's main road. She's spending these years "at home," and there's not much more to say about her. But the exhortations feminists direct at careerists—to bring out the best in themselves, to be responsible, independent, and strong—should also be issued as challenges to women at home. ■


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# TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES

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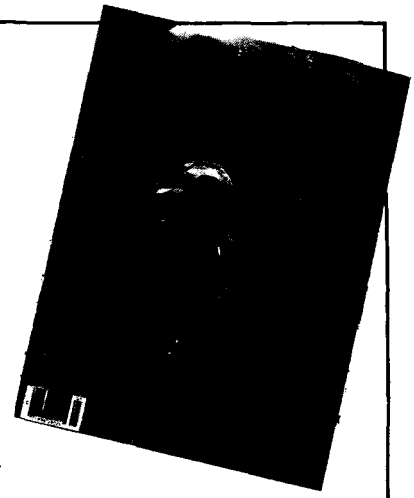
### *As a stop-gap measure, all binoculars will be confiscated from the parliamentary chambers.*

Swaziland's energy minister, Prince Khusulwandle, has appealed to his compatriots to stop making love in the torrid waters of the Lobamba hot springs tourist resort. The prince told parliament, which meets within sight of the spring, that the government would take undisclosed action if such activities continued in the "cuddle puddles," as they're described in some travel brochures.

### *Pat Buchanan has ordered several for Christmas*

*Soldier of Fortune* magazine is advertising a poster series entitled, "Glamour & Guns," which features "firearms and females together in unforgettable combination—bikinis to evening gowns."



### *Tonight's feature is hosted by Mr. Rogers*

The movie "Hotel New Hampshire" ran on cable recently, advertised as "a colorful comedy drama, with Nastassja Kinski, Jodie Foster. Adult language and humor, incest, violence, rape."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◆

### *'OK, you can supply the questions, too, but that's as far as I go'*

A famous White House reporter was overheard trying to get a top administration interview: "I am willing to submit questions in advance, but don't tell anyone."

◆

### *The exploding cigar received an honorable mention*

The House and Senate last month passed a joint resolution commemorating the Bay of Pigs invasion as an expedition "in the tradition of the great liberators Jose Marti and Simon Bolivar to liberate from communist tyranny the beautiful isle of Cuba."



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# A Final Word on *The New Republic* and Those Cigarette Ads

By David Owen

In the March *Washington Monthly* ("The Cigarette Companies: How They Get Away With Murder, Part II"), I described how magazines that depend on cigarette advertising bend over backward to please the tobacco companies. Indeed, my article had originally been commissioned by *The New Republic*, but Martin Peretz, that magazine's owner and editor-in-chief, had killed it out of fear that *The New Republic* might lose its own lucrative cigarette ads. Since Peretz had now confirmed the thesis of my article, I added him to the story and sent it to *The Washington Monthly*.

In subsequent press reports, Peretz has denied almost everything I said about his treatment of my article. He told *The Washington Post*: "It was not a piece that was commissioned by us. I thought it was frankly a hysterical piece... I didn't believe the piece, and I didn't run it." Leon Wieseltier, *The New Republic's* literary editor, implied that I had fabricated a quote from him in which he had said that Peretz's decision not to run the story had been based on fears about "massive losses of advertising revenue." Wieseltier told the *Post*: "Being economically illiterate, I doubt that I said that."

These statements by Peretz and Wieseltier were untruthful. My article had indeed been commissioned by *The New Republic*. Ann Hulbert, one of the magazine's senior editors, made the original assignment. When I asked for her assurance that Peretz would really have the courage to run an article critical of one of his major advertisers, she assured me that he would. I received a letter from Wieseltier confirming the assignment. It accompanied a review copy of a new book called *The Smoke Ring*. "Here's the occasion for a big tobacco piece," Wieseltier's letter said. "I'm delighted that you'll do it."

I submitted my article in early October, and it was accepted for publication and entered into *The New Republic*'s computerized editing-and-typesetting system. Hulbert asked me to add a concluding section about antismoking referenda. Because she hoped to run the article almost immediately, she asked me to send this addition by express mail. When I said again that I was surprised that Peretz was actually going to run the piece, she said that he wanted to read it again but that the attitude of all the magazine's other editors was "let the cigarette companies be damned."

Several weeks went by. Peretz was busy making arrangements for *The New Republic*'s seventieth birthday party, I was told, and wouldn't have a chance to reread my article until after the celebration was over. In truth, though, Peretz was already concerned. In late October I received a note from Michael Kinsley, now *The New Republic*'s editor. "My operatives are at work on MP [Martin Peretz] re the smoking piece, to avoid a crisis," he wrote. "The result? It's too early to tell, as we Washington pundits say, but I think there'll be no problems." Peretz later described the article as "hysterical," but Kinsley, in his note, said it was "a wonderful piece."

Another month went by with no word from *The New Republic*. In the magazine's anniversary issue, Hendrik Hertzberg, then editor, wrote about the pleasures of writing for a magazine that didn't buckle under to its advertisers:

"The great thing about working here is that the kind of journalism practiced at *TNR* is 100 percent worthwhile. There's no compromise with 'marketing' or 'service features' or 'reader profiles' or any of the other plagues of the magazine 'industry.' We can allow ourselves to look only for articles about things that are important and interesting, and we can allow our writers to bring the full force of their intelligence, their education, and their moral and political values to bear on their subjects. What a luxury."

Two weeks later, I told Hulbert that I was tired of waiting and that I wanted to know immediate-

*David Owen is a New York writer.*



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ly whether Peretz was going to run my article or not. She called back later to say that she was shocked but that Peretz had decided to kill the story. I told her that I would now like to add my experience with *The New Republic* to my article and asked her if she would arrange a time for me to interview Peretz on the phone. The interview took place on December 18.

"You've happened on an editor-in-chief who is what you call in your piece a flat-earth person," Peretz said. "I have a friend here in Boston at the [Harvard] medical school called Seltzer. I've known his work for years. He's one of the great doubters. He has persuaded me that a lot of this stuff [i.e., evidence of the danger of smoking] is exaggerated and that there is a kind of anti-cancer lobby that is really very dogmatic and that the scientific evidence doesn't support the dogmatism. For instance, he says that a lot of the statistics tend to be coincidence rather than causal.

"Given the fact that I have come to believe at least a lot of what he says, or come to disbelieve or be skeptical of what is now the common wisdom, and I would say particularly or most especially on heart disease and emphysema—a little bit less, I admit, on cancer—this is a costly crusade that I am willing to forego."

I told Peretz that there were only one or two sentences about heart disease in my piece and that I would be happy to delete them if that was all that stood in the way of his publishing it. He rejected this idea. He also said that he didn't believe that newspapers and magazines really did avoid running articles that were unflattering to their cigarette advertisers.

"That struck me as implausible," he said. "I read unflattering mentions about tobacco all the time."

"Not in *The New Republic*," I said.

"I don't need to submit myself to an investigation as to why I don't like your piece. But I did say that given what I believe, I was going to forego what might be a costly crusade."

I asked Peretz why, if this was what he believed, he had taken so long to reject my piece.

"I wanted to show it to my friend," he said, meaning his friend, Seltzer, at the Harvard Medical School. In fact, though, as Peretz later admitted to me, he never showed the piece to Seltzer.

"Did you show it to anyone else?" I asked.

"No," he said.

"Not to the publisher of the magazine?"

"Look, David. I'm not going to submit myself to you asking—I show lots of things, things are showed around all the time."

"Okay," I said, "so you *did* show it to the publisher?"

"I'm not going to answer your questions."

In fact, as I reported in *The Washington Monthly*, Peretz did show my article to both his current publisher, Jeffrey L. Dearth, and his former publisher, James K. Glassman, and asked them whether he should run it. Both Dearth and Glassman later confirmed to me that Peretz had showed them the article.

Peretz and I then talked about payment.

"I'd be happy to discuss compensation," he said, "but I'm not going to discuss compensation in an open and gentlemanly fashion if those questions carry the implication of a threat."

"I don't think there's a threat," I said. "How could I threaten you?"

"Well, I don't know. I'm not about to pay a lot of money for a piece if this piece will then appear in another version and will say that the owner of the magazine showed this around to his publisher and his ex-publisher and this and that. So what are you willing to say?"

"Now that sounds like a threat," I said.

"I just want to know what the terms are."

"I don't think there are any terms. I want compensation for the time I spent, because in my opinion you didn't have the nerve to say at the beginning that you wouldn't run a piece about cigarettes."

In the end, Peretz paid me a $750 "kill fee." This is five times what I would have been paid if he had actually run the story.

I also talked to Wieseltier that day. "If it were up to me, I would have run it a month ago," he told me. "And Marty knows that." He also said, as I reported (and as he later seemed to deny), that fears about "massive losses of advertising revenue" had indeed been the reason Peretz had killed the story. "The issue is the courage it involves to publish a piece that is critical of the tobacco companies," he told me. There's no reason in the world not to publish the piece because of the argument."

After my article was finally published in *The Washington Monthly*, Peretz told his staff, in the words of one member, "not to be candid" with reporters about what had happened. Michael Kinsley, to his credit, confirmed to a conference of magazine journalists that the article had been commissioned and that it was killed for advertising reasons. But after Peretz's warning, Wieseltier was no longer able to recall precisely what Peretz had said. ■


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# Are the Churches Getting "TOO RADICAL"?

There is a new ferment in the churches today. Recently, 200 top military leaders got together at the National War College, and a high-ranking general stated that, "The greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches."

The focal point of that challenge seems to be the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace. Of course, mainline Protestant churches have issued similar, if less conspicuous, critiques of nuclear weapons and the arms build-up. Significantly, at a time when the country is said to be awash with superpatriotic fervor, Christians are taking their gospel mandate to be peacemakers seriously, and in a way that cannot be dismissed as trendiness.

Also, at a time when wars on poverty are definitely out of vogue, the churches are bucking the spirit of the times and increasingly heeding the words of Christ, that what we have failed to do for the "least of these" we have failed to do for Him. Indeed, the Catholic bishops' pastoral on the economy explicitly embraces the "preferential option for the poor."

Jerry Falwell has attacked that pastoral for coming close to "socialism." If "socialism" is about extending democracy to the economy, he may be right, but the bishops are to be applauded, not excoriated.

The bishops have shocked conventional opinion by calling for "economic democracy," including co-operative ownership of enterprises by workers. But such ideas, however daring in the U.S. context, are as old as the papal encyclicals. It is not surprising, then, that we hear polemicists for privilege decry the Catholic "anti-capitalist" tradition. Nor is it surprising that when Pope John Paul II went to Canada and said that "the needs of the poor must take priority over the desires of the rich, and the rights of workers over the maximization of profits," *Business Week* would quote a Vatican-watcher as saying, "You might call" the pope "a social democrat."

Apologists for the corporate elite and the military have reason to be leery of the churches. But no, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW do *not* believe the churches are too radical, so long as that radicalism is rooted in the gospel and not secular ideologies. If the churches are faithful to their Lord, the Bible, and their own traditions, they cannot help but succor the poor, champion the rights of the less advantaged, and try to quiet the gale winds of war. They are compelled to say a decisive "NO!" to the idols of greed, consumerism, and national-interest-above-all.

And more: the NEW OXFORD REVIEW is one of those few voices which does not believe that Christian social concern goes hand-in-hand with doctrinal skepticism and moral relativism. As our columnist John C. Cort (the veteran labor activist) said, if we Christians are truly to sacrifice ourselves on behalf of others, we need "more faith, and less doubt." And our writers — people like J.M. Cameron, Juli Loesch, Richard V. Pierard, and Robert E. Webber — work out of this vision.

The NEW OXFORD REVIEW is an ecumenically Christian monthly magazine edited by lay Catholics. We discuss not only justice and peace but the full range of theological and ethical issues confronting contemporary Christians. Other periodicals have characterized us as "feisty and gutsy," "influential," even "cheeky." Why not find out what these encomia are about and subscribe today!

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# ON POLITICAL BOOKS

## A Vision of The Ideal Newspaper

By Paul Bass

Ralph Ingersoll dreamed of the ideal daily newspaper. It bore little resemblance to *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. Poets, playwrights, and inspired reporters would write it, "in English—not Journalese." The writers, not businessmen, would run the show. The newspaper's design would rival that of the classiest magazines; so would the quality of paper, photography, and reproduction. It would carry no ads. The reporters would pursue and expose "the truth" free of any party line, waging war against "people who push other people around."

Ingersoll got a chance to give form to his dream. He called it *PM*, and the paper hit the streets of New York City in 1940. Then it fell flat on its face.

Why did Ingersoll fail? That's an uncomfortable question for those who nurture a belief that the market can reward high standards in journalism. Roy Hoopes's new biography of Ingersoll* provides—perhaps inadvertently—at least one scapegoat for *PM*'s early death: Ingersoll himself, who died this March at the age of 84.

Despite a generally fawning tone, Hoopes probes deeply into Ingersoll's motivations and demonstrates that the publisher's personality contradicted his journalistic vision in crucial ways. In the end, Ingersoll comes across as remarkably similar to the publishers and owners he crusaded against: men with a talent for making big bucks in the newspaper biz but not the idealism biz.

Ingersoll aimed high—which is precisely why we still should care about him. He sought to improve not just "the miserable conditions of the U.S. press" but of "mankind" as well. He had learned firsthand what bad journalism was all about as a cub reporter for William Randolph Hearst's *American*. He later worked for Henry Luce and helped shape the Time, Inc. empire. Ingersoll himself experienced frustration as a novelist and nonfiction writer, but in a series of memos, some as long as 60 pages, he honed his ideal newspaper.

The publication he envisioned differed in style and philosophy not just from Hearst's brand of journalism but also from today's respectable city dailies. For starters, *PM* would be a "newspaper that read like a magazine." He planned to hire first-class writers, whether or not they knew about the 5 W's. *PM* united on a single masthead I. F. Stone, James Wechsler, Dalton Trumbo, Dorothy Parker, Hodding Carter, and even Dr. Seuss (Theodore Seuss Geisel).

These writers were to be free from the influence of "men of property," who, Ingersoll wrote, "simply do not understand journalism [and] therefore can hardly be expected to improve its practice." Ingersoll had family ties in the corporate world and raised $1.5 million from 16 different investors. They ranged from an old friend, who happened to be the heir of the Sears, Roebuck fortune, to Deering Howe, a strident conservative who was a member of the Deering Tractor family. Ingersoll, the paper's principal

*Paul Bass is comanager of Cooperative News Service, a freelance journalists' network.*

**Ralph Ingersoll: A Biography.* Roy Hoopes. *Atheneum, $19.95.*



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owner, insisted that his backers guarantee his independence.

Ingersoll also protected *PM* from the "baleful" influence of advertisers. He planned to summarize the advertising "news" from other papers but to refuse to run any paid ads. Readers, and only readers, would support *PM*. "No honest, competent newspaperman will deny that the pressure generated by the existing advertising operation in daily journalism works consistently and without interruption against the interest of the reader," he wrote. "It works so efficiently, in fact, that publishers and editors and writers censor themselves 100 times for every once their advertisers censor them."

Even editors would have little authority to manipulate reporters' conclusions, Ingersoll proclaimed. Writers would have the right not only to think for themselves, but to feel—and to express their feelings despite the journalistic canon of objectivity. "We do not, in fact, believe unbiased journalism exists, feeling rather that claims to emotional disinterest are consciously or unconsciously, fraudulent," he wrote in an essay that debunks a myth still cherished by newspaper editors. "What do we love, and what do we hate? Our readers are entitled to that information, freely and frankly given." Ingersoll argued that a newspaper could scrutinize all sides of an issue with fairness and at the same time crusade.

"It was the impossible dream," Hoopes writes of Ingersoll's tabloid. "And it lasted less than three months." In that short time, *PM* fell so deeply into debt that Ingersoll had to relinquish control to one of his investors, Marshall Field, who bought out the other backers' shares. Ingersoll continued working for Field for six years, but *PM* hardly approached Ingersoll's original ideal, especially as he increasingly lost influence at the paper. *PM* folded altogether after eight years and many compromises, including the addition of paid advertising.

Like Ingersoll, Hoopes lays most of the blame for *PM's* demise on forces beyond the pioneering publisher's control. He didn't anticipate the problems his literary artists would have meeting deadlines, let alone filing fresh stories on a daily basis. The paper was red-baited because Ingersoll, who sympathized with communist theory, refused to bar leftists from his newsroom. Meanwhile, communists and anticommunists on the staff engaged in ferocious political battles, which were exacerbated by the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939.

On the financial side, Ingersoll's staff fumbled away early profit opportunities. Ingersoll, for example, had signed up 150,000 charter subscribers, but because of wide publicity surrounding *PM's* opening, huge crowds intercepted the delivery trucks and bought up all 450,000 copies of the first issue. While some people paid 50 cents on the street for a five-cent paper, the charter subscribers never got *PM* that afternoon. Some never saw it on their doorsteps; in the confusion, Ingersoll discovered all 150,000 subscription cards had been thrown out.

Mismanagement and the country's political climate contributed to the failure of *PM*, but Ingersoll's personal shortcomings played a key part, too. Ironically, the Ralph Ingersoll whom Hoopes depicts sounds a lot like William Hearst and the other captains of industry who Ingersoll said had no place running newspapers.

In fact, Ingersoll came from a long line of "men of property": congressmen, diplomats, a governor, a judge, even a banking tycoon. His upper-class New York rearing never seemed a contradiction in his eyes. He continued as an adult to enjoy the drinking company and business contacts of his family's social circle. Though a champion of the "common man," Ingersoll spoke the language of the CEOs he had buttered up while editing *Fortune* for Henry Luce and had dined


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with at the Yale Club while seeking capital for *PM*.

In addition to his desire to elevate the standards of journalism, Ingersoll told his biographer that he felt he had to "prove his manhood" with *PM*. The object of this demonstration was Lillian Hellman, one of Ingersoll's many paramours. While vacationing on Tavern Island with Hellman and Dashiell Hammett, Ingersoll found himself unable to compete with Hammett's wit. He paddled off into Long Island Sound in a jealous rage, shaking his fist and resolving to show Hellman what he could do.

Ingersoll also had something to prove to Henry Luce after Luce refused to hand him the reins of *Life* magazine, a publication Ingersoll helped develop. "I would work for no other man, except as a means to acquire my own ends," Ingersoll decided. "I would prove my manhood by creating a publication of my own." His ego was so caught up in *PM* that, by his own admission, he couldn't trust other people to assume much responsibility. It's not surprising that a publisher trying to juggle too many tasks would manage to lose the names of 150,000 subscribers.

Nor is it surprising that Ingersoll talked a better game than he played in allowing writers to think for themselves. A friend of Ingersoll's whom Marshall Field sent in to evaluate *PM's* problems reported: "Writers do not think 'How should I write this article' but 'How would Mr. Ingersoll write this article?' The most commonly mentioned objective on the part of all writers was to interpret the viewpoint of Mr. Ingersoll."

Like many zealots, Ingersoll crusaded for an intellectual ideal while destroying the lives of those close to him. He plowed through four marriages and countless traumatic affairs and near-engagements before he died. He was manipulative and ruthless with his associates.

Ingersoll conceded he lacked interest in "human relationships." To Hoopes, that explains why he failed as a novelist. But it may also explain why Ingersoll failed at publishing the ideal newspaper: his concern for page design couldn't make up for his lack of concern for the people who wrote his copy.

After the collapse of *PM*, Ingersoll began buying up community weekly newspapers. Since he had by then abandoned any pretense of being a journalistic reformer, his lack of personal warmth no longer hindered his professional success. Hoopes explains: "Making money, in his view, was usually accomplished by inferior people, and it was easy to do, once you knew how." Ingersoll learned how.

Today, the newspaper chain he started, Ingersoll Publications, flourishes in mediocrity. But Ingersoll left a more positive legacy. *PM* did spark reform in the newspaper business. Thanks to Ingersoll, consumer issues, health, labor, and the press have become serious "beats," treated as keys to understanding our society. The "women's pages" have given way in all but the most archaic newsrooms to "living" and "style" sections, thanks largely to Ingersoll's judgment that "less timely" social issues can be as important to people as the latest White House press release.

The Ralph Ingersoll who launched *PM* was part of a noble journalistic tradition that continued after the 1940s. Izzy Stone left the paper to launch the fiercely independent and crusading *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, which, like the early *PM*, carried no ads. The "New Journalism" of the 1960s made the idea of "a newspaper that reads like a magazine"—and of news conveyed with an explicitly subjective edge—more palatable to legions of talented reporters.

Perhaps the most encouraging part of *PM's* legacy is the fleeting image of crowds mobbing the delivery trucks. Sure, they disappeared within days and went back to reading the *Daily News*. But they *were* looking for something. ■


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# POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

**The Double Man.** Senators Gary Hart and William S. Cohen. *Morrow, $16.95.* In the history of the republic, only three sitting senators have been elected president: Benjamin Harrison, Warren Harding, and John Kennedy. It may be because senators speak Senatese, a sub-dialect of Bureaucratese. They have an especially hard time communicating to normal people.

This spy book by William Cohen and Gary Hart is living testimony to how a senate career can atrophy ordinary faculties of communication. Characters are developed in brief paragraphs aides could well have written to honor a constituent at a Rotary awards dinner. As for the descriptive minutia that give spy novels their grip, forget it. A prime example is the description of the hero's office: "In furnishings as in politics, Chandler favored a blend of the traditional and the contemporary." Prose for the Congressional Record.

If there is anything to learn about our politicians from the book besides the hint that their flat, postured public personalities are more deeply ingrained than we might like to think, it's their attitude toward the press. Reporters are either stooges, who unwittingly pass information for the CIA, or vultures who get the story wrong while violating privacies. Ironically, the flattery on the book's dust-jacket comes from Dan Rather and Bob Woodward.

Certainly it's admirable that two busy politicians could find time for the humanist task of writing a novel that does become mildly engrossing toward the finish. But victims of the hype for this celebrity book will be disappointed.

—*Richard Meyer*

**The Uncensored John Henry Faulk.** John Henry Faulk. *Texas Monthly Press, $16.95.* Back in the 1950s, folk humorist John Henry Faulk was fired from his job at CBS after a group of paranoids suggested his loyalty was suspect. Unlike many similar victims of the era, Faulk fought back with a libel suit. He won, but only after half a decade on the broadcasting blacklist.

Faulk's book reminds us not only how vicious those times were, but how silly. The witch-hunters should have realized that real communists don't have a sense of humor. And besides, Faulk's writing is almost pathologically American.

In this book, Faulk has the last laugh. Apparently unscarred and certainly unrepentant, he has gathered here a collection of columns, scripts, sermons, essays, tall tales, and the transcript of a one-man show he took on the road. Unfortunately, the uncensored John Henry Faulk seems unedited as well. You must approach this book the way you would the store in which you buy it, passing quickly over the junk to discover the items of real value. In the former category, the various newspaper columns, with their heavy-handed jus' folks style, can be skipped without loss.

What Faulk does best, and very well, is tell stories. Of course, being a Texan makes it easier. A herd of writers from that state have risen to prominence in no small part by remembering what their relatives and neighbors said and did. In Washington, the writer is surrounded by the unsatisfying irony of dull people in interesting jobs; in Texas, even feeding the chickens becomes high drama, full of villains and heroes. (Faulk proves it with a moving account of his efforts to save from the Sunday dinner table a hen who wanted to set when she should have been laying.) Even his acknowledgements suggest more tales where these came from. I am envious of any writer who can thank Cactus Pryor for anything.

Faulk has the senses of a folklorist, and he sees and hears things others would miss in their rush to the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. It's a skill he picked up early. His 1940 master's thesis at the University of Texas was titled "Ten Negro Sermons." The bibliography consisted of one book: the Bible. Two of these sermons are included in Faulk's book

In his one-man show, Faulk brought together a collection of characters ranging from the misbegotten Totsie Taylor to the eloquent Reverend Tanner Franklin (who tells the story of David and Goliath about as well as it can be told) to the mealy-mouthed Congressman John Guffaw.

Totsie was killed by the Katy Flyer while he was sitting on the tracks. His remains were so scattered that the family leased four acres for the funeral, just to be safe. Brother Culpepper said it "was the biggest funeral he had ever preached. Acreage-wise."

Of course, John Faulk isn't just having fun. Near the beginning of the book, he tells about the time the sheriff deputized the white males in the town to search for a black man accused of stabbing a deputy sheriff. Some of the party used the situation as an excuse to terrorize the black community. Faulk tells the story through the nonjudgmental eyes of himself as a child. This restraint, part of the storyteller's art, imprints the incident on the mind the way no amount of moralizing would have.

Faulk's characters, the good and the bad, are all Americans; he seems to be saying that without an appreciation of fierce, even eccentric, individualism, we can't hope for a decent unity.

Faulk has another message: love your language. Faulk not only speaks of Americans; he speaks American, a variation of English which, at its best, values meaning over elegance, and imagery over structure. As I was reading this book, news came that Gary Hart had suggested in a speech that we should deal with our economic problems by replacing *laissez faire* with *aidez faire*. I suspect Faulk would tell Hart he won't get to be president talking like that. In fact, much of the Democratic party seems to have forgotten how to talk American. Hart or anyone else with


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similar aspirations could do far worse than hire Faulk as a speechwriter. Then, maybe, they could—in the words of Congressman Guffaw, "discuss these issues in plain English, the language my mother spoke, the language the Holy Bible was wrote in."

*—Sam Smith*

**The Staffs of Life**. E. J. Kahn. *Little, Brown, $19.95.* In the margins of galley sheets and in the halls of *The New Yorker*'s famously barren offices, Harold Ross, the magazine's founding editor and gruff guru, would yelp his journalistic passion: "Facts! More facts!" Ross was not terribly interested in fluff or fiction.

E. J. Kahn Jr. is one of the presiding figures at *The New Yorker* who grew up under the wrath and genius of Ross. Kahn's work has appeared in the magazine for decades. He has published fact-stuffed studies of Micronesia, Harvard University, the State of Georgia, John Hay "Jock" Whitney, and, of course, *The New Yorker*. Now he's produced a book so strangely encyclopedic that it may have overwhelmed even Ross. *The Staffs of Life*, with its rambling chapters on corn, potatoes, wheat, rice, and soybeans, is bland feed. The book reads too often like a padded term paper with hardly a jot of political or imaginative thought. One imagines poor Ross drowning in the deep silo of Kahn's grain, shrieking, "Facts! No more facts!"

Somewhere along the way, Kahn misinterpreted the Credo of Ross. He moves earnestly from wheat field to rice paddy finding his facts in gluey clumps. Only occasionally is he disappointed: "Just how rice got into Guam is uncertain, but. . . ." The rice chapter somehow balloons into a bizarre set-piece on coconuts, and the prose shifts from the flatness of *The World Book Encyclopedia* to the strangeness of *Naked Lunch*. Kahn climbs up a tree and find this unlikely nut: "The juice, before it hardens into meat, is a delicious thirst quencher, as thousands of American servicemen hitherto unacquainted with coconuts in their own milieu were happy to discover during the Second World War. (Forty years later, a new generation had the same refreshing initiation in Grenada.)"

Kahn tells us in a preface that he decided to write this series of pieces while touring the Third World with his wife in various chauffeured automobiles. He is compelled to write by a genuine sense of the importance of crops. But nothing adheres. The reader closes the book on these facts, facts, facts, and he is aching, not thinking.

*—David Remnick*

**The Pied Piper: Allard Lowenstein and the Liberal Dream**. Richard Cummings. *Grove Press, $19.95.* We thought we knew Allard Lowenstein. For 30 years beginning in 1950, he fought fiercely against South African apartheid. In 1964 he helped organize the landmark "Mississippi Summer" civil rights drive. He led the 1967 "Dump Johnson" campaign against the Vietnam war. He served for two years in Congress and tried unsuccessfully to return three times. Lowenstein was a thoroughly public man.

Richard Cummings portrays a different person, contending that deceit was "inherent in Lowenstein's career." The author argues that Lowenstein was a Central Intelligence Agency operative in Spain and Africa in the early 1960s and a collaborator with intelligence officials throughout his adult life. Lowenstein, says Cummings, saw himself as a representative of the CIA's "good wing" of liberal Democrats, who used the agency to fight communism by backing anti-communist neutralist regimes around the world. Indeed, the CIA's "good wing" was Lowenstein's primary affiliation, according to Cummings. He "good-winged it" in Mississippi for civil rights (Cummings charges Lowenstein provide disinformation to the FBI on left-wing activities); and he "good-winged it" against Lyndon Johnson (where Lowenstein's position against the war, it turns out, was identical to the CIA's).

There are a great many references and footnotes here meant to convey an impression of voluminous research to support these controversial assertions. Yet since the book's publication, innumerable inaccuracies and distortions have been found in Cummings' work. Lowenstein's former associates have assembled no fewer than 400 affidavits in rebuttal, many from people Cummings interviewed, who now claim their words and meanings were mangled. The affidavits include an especially revealing internal CIA memorandum describing Lowenstein as a "troublemaker" who "represents no one but himself." (As an official of the National Student Association in the mid-1960s, I worked with Lowenstein. Cummings' allegation that Lowenstein defended covert CIA funding of NSA activities is false.)

It becomes clear that Cummings' purpose goes beyond smearing Lowenstein; the author also wishes to discredit the liberal ideology Lowenstein stood for. Cummings writes that "the whole issue of 'authenticity' which was so hotly debated in the sixties arose because many suspected that things were not what they appeared to be, that liberalism was an illusion masking a reality of manipulation and self-interest." Lowenstein, he insists, embodied these bankrupt politics.

The only deception that Cummings proves is his own. He misrepresented himself as a Lowenstein admirer to the man's family and friends, only to twist the information they gave him into a hatchet with which to attack his subject. Cummings has attempted to make his own reputation by destroying that of an admirable American. He fails on both accounts.

*—Ed Schwartz*

**The Floating Island: A Tale of Washington**. Garrett Epps. *Houghton Mifflin, $14.95.* Here at last is a Washington novel that doesn't feature the president of the United States, or a senator or congressman, or even a prominent journalist. For those who regard the Washington novel as a genre whose promise has never been realized, this is an important qualification.



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What suffices in most Washington novels is a juvenile preoccupation with Power and Glamour, which tends to drain the characters of life. The central figure of *Floating Island* is a minor political hanger-on and petty bureaucrat (special assistant to the assistant secretary for Evaluation, Training, and Morale). The other characters are similarly unimpressive as personages. Instead, they are real people.

Another common defect in Washington novels, even ostensibly comic ones, is that they take the city seriously as the capital of the free world. Thus the second distinguishing feature of *Floating Island* is that it's a slapstick farce. This enables it to get at the central truth other Washington novels miss, that Washington is a perfectly ridiculous place.

Garrett Epps, whose previous novel, *The Shad Treatment*, was a more conventional political melodrama about a race for the governorship of Virginia, spent several years in Washington as a writer for the *Post* and as the part-time fiction editor of *The Washington Monthly*. Further disclosure: he is also an old colleague of mine. Despite these disadvantages, he has written a laughing-out-loud book about the wars between civil servants and political appointees, the machinations of Capital Hill aides, the deviousness of local television reporters, and a city divided just about equally between the ruthlessly ambitious and the clinically insane. This is Washington as the early Evelyn Waugh might have portrayed it, which means it's both funny and nasty, a delightful combination.

—*Michael Kinsley*

**Other People's Money: The Rise and Fall of OPM Leasing Services.** Stephen Fenichell. *Anchor Books, $16.95.* In Mel Brooks' film, *The Producers*, Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder, as Bialystock and Bloom, try to buy an early retirement in Rio de Janeiro by selling endless amounts of stock in *Springtime for Hitler*, a Broadway musical they think is sure to flop. But the show is a camp success, and as in any good morality tale, Mostel and Wilder see their scheme unravel, and they hoof it off to the hoosegow.

In *Other People's Money*, Stephen Fenichell spins out a real-life version of *The Producers*. Myron Goodman and Mordecai Weissman were two cocky kids from Brooklyn when, in 1970, they founded OPM, a computer leasing firm. Later, in a broad gesture worthy of Brooksian comedy, Goodman and Weissman used the Yiddish version of "other people's money"—*Andere Menschens Gelt*—as the name for a subsidiary, AMG Leasing. Devising a scheme that involved major banks, Rockwell International, American Express, Lehman Brothers and IBM,


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Goodman and Weissman constructed an elaborate financial daisy chain that defrauded investors of a total of $250 million.

OPM rented hundreds of computers at rock bottom rates and allowed leaseholders such as Rockwell the option of canceling their leases and dumping obsolescent machinery back on OPM. As the computer industry's technology raced along, Goodman and Weissman were left behind with colossal debts and heaps of useless hardware. To save themselves from ruin, they financed the same computers more than once, forged invoices and leases to obtain financing on computers that did not exist, and even made fake phone calls to Rockwell impersonating bank officers. After a dizzying run of hundreds of fraudulent transactions, Goodman and Weissman were foiled in 1981 and sentenced to long terms at Allenwood.

The OPM scandal raises a number of interesting questions: how could various Fortune 500 companies, major banks, and law firms fall prey to a couple of incompetent schleps from Brooklyn? What motivated Goodman and Weissman to engage in a scheme so poorly disguised that its detection was a certainty?

Unfortunately, Fenichell never addresses such questions or derives any larger meaning from his subject. He has little insight into his protagonists, and his prose falls into a pattern of moralistic wisecracking, delivered in borscht-belt cadences. He fails altogether to empathize with this real-life version of Bialystock and Bloom. Goodman suffered from a horrible, debilitating disease, a detail which seemed to bear heavily upon his erratic, frenzied behavior. Instead of examining such a detail with sensitivity, Fenichell cracks, "That Myron is dying at age 34 usually goes without saying."

The book stresses what observant Jews Goodman and Weissman were, how they would cease defrauding their clients on the Sabbath and resume on Saturday night. But the author would rather pass smug remarks about false piety than draw any conclusions from this fascinating point. In the end, Mel Brooks tells us far more about frauds such as Other People's Money than Stephen Fenichell does.

*—Eric Lewis*

**Freedom Rising**. James North. *Macmillian, $19.95.* James North went to South Africa, he writes, "to see for myself." The result of his journey is an extraordinary collage of South Africans—whites, blacks, Indians, so-called "coloreds," nonchalant racists, and underground resisters of apartheid policies.

This book could not have appeared at a better time. Even as the list of people arrested for demonstrating in front of the South African embassy begins to read like a sampling of *Who's Who in America* and the South African government slowly but visibly reacts to such pressure, there are few current books on the country. This one is a welcome and intriguing guide to a troubled and complicated land.

The author, who used the pen name North to protect his real identity while reporting, spent four-and-a-half years traveling through South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia.

What North does best is describe the people he met. A dignified black South African maid tells him: "I can say that my life has been terrible. . . . Nothing will ever get better here. These white people are rock-hard—they will never change. Why is there the separation here? If I touch you, you don't turn brown, do you? It must be better in other countries."

North confronts apartheid personally. He is at the pass office with two black friends going through the demeaning process of having their passes renewed. He listens to a "colored" couple and their friends feverishly discussing how to defy an eviction notice ordering the couple to vacate their apartment in an illegally integrated pocket of Johannesburg. (They eventually had to leave.)

North is no detached journalist, and he makes that clear. In the first chapter, he describes meeting an underground activist in Johannesburg and carrying messages from him to his organization outside the country. But North's tone is never self-righteous; his greatest bias is one of hope about the country's future—the result of his encounters with undaunted white and black resisters.

*—Carla Hall*

**Red Baker**. Robert Ward. *Dial, $14.95.* Robert Ward may have grown up in a Baltimore neighborhood of steel and railroad workers, but in this novel he chooses his characters from the script of a television movie. His hero is a violent drunk, unable to cope with being laid off from the local steel mill. Red Baker abuses his wife, his son, and the woman of his fantasies. And, of course, in despairing-prole fashion, he turns to crime. In the end, Baker's long-suffering wife stands by her man as they ship out west for a new life. This is dank melodrama, not literature. Worse, it's a portrait of blue-collar workers that simply perpetuates old class prejudices.

The best passage in the book is a wonderfully uproarious football game between a group of laid-off fathers and their sons. There is more desperation and heart in this scene of middle-aged men trying to recapture the hope they once had than anywhere else in the book.

*—Kitry Krause*

**The Fall of Saigon**. David Butler. *Simon and Schuster, $18.95.* David Butler provides a dramatic reminiscence of the chaotic last months of American forces in South Vietnam. An NBC radio stringer in 1974 and 1975, Butler depicts the withdrawal from the perspective of the most senior American and Vietnamese officials, as well as confused Saigon residents and fleeing Westerners. The book suffers, however, from the same sense of desperation it describes. Butler tries to follow too many characters through too many adventures. No new insights into America's longest war emerge from this book.

*—Philip A. Frayne*



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